

Amnesty charges Kurds of rampant abuses

NICOSIA (AP) — Feuding factions which rule the self-governing Kurdish enclave in northern Iraq are guilty of rampant human rights abuses, Amnesty International said Tuesday. "The situation in Iraqi Kurdistan is now critical," the London-based human rights monitoring group said in a report prepared after a three-year study of the situation there. "A climate of fear has been building up in Iraqi Kurdistan where there have been waves of assassinations, torture, and killings of prisoners," the report said. "During the last three years, hundreds of people — civilians and combatants taken prisoner — have suffered human rights abuses at the hands of forces acting under the authority of Kurdish political parties," it added. Amnesty said the abuses were committed by armed forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and its ally, the Tehran-backed Islamic Movement in Iraq, Kurdistan, and the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Amnesty said that "the Kurdish people suffered terribly from past human rights violations by the Iraqi government, which continues to commit crimes on a massive scale with total impunity. Now it is the Kurdish political parties which are abusing fundamental human rights."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية الراي.

Palestinian population 4.6m in 17 years

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — The Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will double to 4.6 million in less than a generation because of a high birth rate and the return of thousands of exiles, Palestinian officials said Monday. A report issued by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (PBS) shows that in recent years, more Palestinians have returned to the West Bank and Gaza Strip than left the area. "Now, we have a reversing trend," said Hassan Abu Libdeh, director general of PBS. He said that since Palestinian self-rule began in May in the Gaza Strip and of Jericho, some 80,000 Palestinians returned from exile. Mr. Abu Libdeh said he expected 50,000 Palestinians to return from abroad every year. Some 250,000 Palestinians who live abroad have maintained their right to residency in the West Bank and Gaza. From 1967 to 1992, some 329,000 Palestinians had left the West Bank and Gaza, according to the report. The report estimated the population in the West Bank and Gaza at 2.3 million. The Palestinian researchers started out with figures provided by the Israeli bureau of statistics which put the population at slightly more than two million.

Volume 19 Number 5856

AMMAN TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1995, RAMADAN 28, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

15 injured in road accident

AMMAN (J.T.) — Fifteen people were injured in a road accident on the Amman-Zarqa highway on Monday, according to a Civil Defence Department (CDD) official. The official told the Jordan Times that the accident took place Monday afternoon when a public transport company bus slammed into a trailer truck. All injured were taken to Zarqa government hospital and were listed in good to fair condition.

Officials take courses

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on Monday attended at the Royal Cultural Centre a graduation ceremony for officials who completed administration courses organised by the Public Administration Institute in 1994. Minister of Administrative Development Moheiddin Toq delivered an address at the ceremony in which he said these courses are part of an integrated training plan aiming to develop the performance of civil servants. He said his ministry will continue through the institute to implement a national training plan in order to improve administrative performance. At the end of the ceremony, Sharif Zeid distributed diplomas to the 135 graduates who represent various government departments and ministries.

University professor killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria went through another weekend of political violence with a woman university professor assassinated here and a man sitting in a packed coffee house killed by a group of armed men in a village west of Algiers. The professor, who taught at the National Institute of Agronomy located in an Algiers suburb, was identified as Khadija Aissa by local radio. The radio said she was killed Sunday by "terrorists." The daily Liberté newspaper also reported Monday on the killing of a villager in Sidi Abdallah, located 20 kilometres west of Algiers.

Zaire expels dozens of Lebanese

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouze denounced Monday a decision by Zaire to expel dozens of Lebanese nationals for "economic crimes" such as diamond smuggling. "This decision shows it has not been well thought out. Children's names are on the list and it is hardly likely or logical that they have broken any laws," he told journalists. "We consider this an injustice against the Lebanese community. If it is true that some Lebanese have broken the law, it is unfair that the whole community should be affected by this decision." The Lebanese charge d'affaires in Zaire has been asked by Mr. Bouze to contact the Zairean authorities for talks on the situation. Mr. Bouze has also contacted France and Belgium over the issue. Some 84 foreigners, mostly Lebanese, were given 24 hours to leave the country in a decree by Prime Minister Kengo Wa Dondo issued in Kinshasa on Friday.

Germany holds alleged PKK chief

BONN (R) — Germany has arrested an alleged Kurdish separatist leader suspected of organising attacks on Turkish targets in Germany, authorities said on Monday. A German court approved prosecutors' request and issued an arrest warrant for the 45-year-old Dutch national of Kurdish extraction, identified only as Mehmet A., the federal prosecutor's office in Karlsruhe said. The man was detained in the southwestern German city of Stuttgart last week on suspicion of belonging to a "terrorist" organisation. It said the suspect was in charge of operations in the Stuttgart area for the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK).

King meets Abdul Meguid, reiterates willingness to help advance peace talks

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Monday reiterated Jordan's principled stands on the Middle East peace process and stressed the Kingdom's endeavours to achieve just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

During a meeting with Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid, King Hussein also stressed that Jordan would continue to support peace negotiations on other Arab-Israeli tracks to achieve that end and to enable the peoples of the region to achieve progress and prosperity.

Dr. Abdul Meguid voiced appreciation of the King's efforts to achieve peace and attempts to settle Arab differences and unify the ranks of the Arab Nation through dialogue.

He stressed the need to activate the role of the Arab League to enable it to carry out its duties and to stand up to challenges facing it. The Arab League secretary-general also underlined the importance of Jordan's pursuit to achieve peace in the region.

The meeting was held by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Foreign

Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti and Arab League Assistant Secretary-General Ahmad Adel.

Dr. Abdul Meguid was received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in the presence of Mr. Kabarti.

Prince Hassan discussed with Dr. Abdul Meguid coordination and stressed the need to remove these obstacles.

He said there were three steps that should be taken to achieve Arab reconciliation. He said the Arab countries should first openly discuss their problems to diagnose them, should be flexible and should discuss means of serving Arab interests.

Earlier Monday, Dr. Abdul Meguid strongly condemned Israel's blockade on Lebanese ports as a provocation that could lead to further tension in the Middle East.

Speaking after a meeting with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the Arab League chief said that Israeli actions "are not conducive to creating an appropriate atmosphere for the peace process to succeed."

He said that during his recent visits to Syria and Lebanon he felt that their

leaderships were "truly oriented towards peace and the continuation of efforts for achieving a just and durable peace in conformity with the international legitimacy and U.N. resolutions which call for the exchange of land for peace."

"The peace process is facing obstacles which we all know about, yet the Arab side is keen on pushing it forward because, like Israel, we are in need of peace," Dr. Abdul Meguid said.

Referring to Sunday's Saudi Arabian-Yemeni declaration which ended a border dispute between the two countries, Dr. Abdul Meguid said that the Arab League welcomes the development.

"We hope that Arab governments will be able to contain all differences and opt for cooperation and dialogue to solve outstanding issues," he said.

Dr. Abdul Meguid denied that he was trying to arrange a summit meeting of the League's 22 members to heal a wide rift caused by the 1990-91 Gulf crisis.

"As far as I'm concerned, there is no Arab summit. Hold-

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein on Monday receives Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid (Petra photo)

Jordan welcomes Riyadh agreement

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Monday welcomed the signing in Riyadh on Sunday of a declaration of principles between Saudi Arabia and Yemen mapping out steps to settle a 60-year border dispute between them.

Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabarti said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that Jordan "believes that Arab border disputes should be resolved within the framework of the Arab context."

Mr. Kabarti voiced hope that the declaration of principles would be "a step in the right direction on the way to resolving the border dispute between the two countries, especially that this dispute might have threatened regional stability and security."

Jordan, the foreign minister said, "welcomes and supports this step and hopes that dialogue between Yemen and Saudi Arabia would continue to reach a final solution of the dispute."

Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia on Sunday hailed the signing of the declaration of principles aimed at settling their border dispute, the official agency SABA reported.

The two leaders who spoke over the telephone also discussed ways of strengthening bilateral ties and consolidating peace, security and stability in the region, the agency said.

After more than a month of difficult talks, the two countries signed an 11-point declaration at Mecca in Saudi Arabia Sunday setting up negotiating teams to demarcate land and sea boundaries, as well as help normalise ties.

The Arabian Peninsula neighbours dispute three provinces bordering northwest Yemen assigned to Saudi control by a treaty in 1934. Tension on the border has spilled over into violence with several armed clashes, the latest on January 10 when more than 30 people were killed, according to diplomats.

Yemeni-Saudi relations became strained during the 1991 Gulf war when Riyadh accused Sanaa of backing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and deteriorated further when Sanaa charged Riyadh with backing southern separatists in Yemen's civil war of May-July last year.

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad welcomed the signing of the Saudi-Yemeni accord, an official spokesman said on Monday.

He said the agreement opened "a new, positive chapter in inter-Arab relations and proved that Arabs have a strong will to overcome marginal disputes."

Mr. Assad sent his deputy, Abdul Halim Khaddam, and Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa to Saudi Arabia and Yemen last month to defuse tension over the dispute.

PLO could freeze peace talks with Israel — Abbas

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) might freeze autonomy talks with Israel at a meeting in Tunis next month but this could be beneficial to their peace deal, one of the architects of the self-rule accord said on Monday.

PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas said security matters had been the main reason for the impasse in the negotiations to implement the remaining points of the historic self-rule agreement.

"The Palestinian leadership could decide on stopping the negotiations with Israel in order to assess what has been achieved and identify obstacles and means needed to resume the talks in a right way," he told the official United Arab Emirates (UAE) news agency WAM during a visit.

"Even if this decision was taken, it will not be wrong nor does it mean a boycott. There is no going back on the road which we have taken," Mr. Abbas, who led the Palestinians in the secret autonomy talks with Israel in Oslo, boycotted a meeting of the Executive Committee in Cairo last week to discuss the future of the negotiations.

The committee is to meet again in Tunis in early March. He said Israel wanted the Palestinian National Author-

ity in autonomous Gaza Strip and Jericho to prevent military attacks, carried out mostly by Hamas.

"This is impossible. It is the duty of the Palestinian Authority to exert efforts to prevent military operations but it cannot guarantee they will stop. This is the main point of difference between the two sides," he said.

But Mr. Abbas said he was opposed to "suicide" attacks that have killed scores of Israelis in the past two years. "I do not agree on such attacks. I believe in peace and the need to build our economy and work to recover our homeland from Israeli hands," he said.

He said the talks with Israel had become "more public relations than political negotiations," and he urged the United States to end the deadlock.

"We are not asking the United States to put pressure on Israel but it must use another style of negotiation than this mistaken style which is more public relations than politics," Mr. Abbas said.

Mr. Abbas signed the 1993 accord in the White House lawn for the PLO. He was speaking during a visit to the UAE. Palestinian officials are visiting Western and Arab countries to explain why peace talks with Israel are deadlocked.

Mr. Abbas declined to

elaborate on how the United States, the main sponsor of the faltering Middle East peace process, ought to act. "They must look into that," he said.

In occupied Jerusalem, Israel's leading peace movement on Monday presented Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin with plans to remove small settlements from the West Bank in a bid to unblock negotiations with the Palestinians.

Peace Now spent an hour with the premier to explain the call to dismantle 26 of the 130 settlements, including the one in Hebron and two around Jenin.

"This plan could get the peace process out of stalemate," the movement's Tsali Reshef told a press conference.

"It will allow the government to move to the next stage of autonomy, that is redeployment and elections."

Mr. Rabin has refused to redeploy his army outside Palestinian population centres to allow elections to go ahead until he feels the PNA is taking strong enough action to prevent extremism.

Peace Now's interim plan would give the authority control over more than 90 per cent of the Palestinian population and evacuate only five per cent of the settlements.

(Continued on page 7) and peo-

Balladur seeks to lay spy scandal to rest

PARIS (AFP) — Prime Minister Edouard Balladur sought Monday to lay to rest the Franco-American spy row, saying the two countries should begin their relations on a renewed spirit of trust.

Speaking after calling in U.S. Ambassador Pamela Harriman for the second such meeting in a week, Mr. Balladur expressed his "wish to see Franco-American relations remain founded on mutual trust," and the "mutual respect of each other's legitimate national interests."

The row was sparked last week by a leaked French intelligence report saying that five U.S. nationals, four of them diplomats at the U.S. embassy, had engaged in economic and political espionage on the French mainland for two years.

Mr. Balladur said in a statement released after the meeting Monday with Ms. Harriman that he had also ordered his interior and foreign ministers, Charles Pasqua and Alain Juppe, to make no further comment "in public or private" on the issue.

Ms. Harriman, who was first summoned last Wednesday shortly after the affair broke, declined to comment as she emerged from Mr. Balladur's Matignon office after a 30-minute meeting.

Israelis fire on Lebanon boats

TYRE, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli gunboats on Monday fired on three Lebanese fishing boats which defied a naval blockade off this southern Lebanon port, the fishermen said.

Twelve fishermen had gone out to sea early Monday on three boats after being encouraged by reports that 10 fishermen had sailed from Tyre and returned unhindered on Sunday despite a two-week naval Israeli blockade.

But this time Israeli gunboats patrolling Lebanese territorial waters opened fire when the boats went beyond a one-kilometre limit set by the Israeli navy, the fishermen said.

No one was hurt in the shooting which forced the men to abandon their nets and return quickly to port, they said.

The two-week blockade of Tyre, which is crippling the livelihood of hundreds of families, was extended northwards to the port of Sidon on Thursday.

Later Monday Iranian-backed Hizbollah guerrillas shelled a position of Israel's proxy militia the South Lebanon Army (SLA) at Qantara in the Israeli self-declared "security zone" without causing any casualties, a SLA spokesman said.

A spokesman for Hizbollah's armed wing the Islamic

Resistance in Tyre said the shells had claimed "victims in the enemy ranks."

Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Motta Gur said the blockade was intended to put pressure on Lebanon to prevent Hizbollah attacks.

"If the Beirut authorities stop the attacks against our communities in the north, our army will leave southern Lebanon and we will be able to reach a peace agreement in two days," Mr. Gur said on Sunday.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouze Monday called on the U.N. Security Council, the Arab League and influential powers to intercede with Israel to lift the "unwarranted blockade and aggression."

He indicated Lebanon would consider lodging a formal complaint with the Security Council if no "tangible contacts failed."

Washington has called on all sides to exercise restraint, and Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid condemned the blockade while on visit to Jordan.

There has been speculation that Israel was trying to apply pressure on Beirut to separate the Lebanese and Syrian tracks of the peace process.

Syria has 40,000 troops stationed in Lebanon and di-

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq dismisses threat of U.S. veto of moves to end sanctions

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq on Monday dismissed a threat by U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright that Washington may veto moves to ease U.N. sanctions saying it would step up efforts to thwart U.S. opposition to lifting the embargo.

Safaa Al Omar, head of the Iraqi external relations department, told AFP: "The threat of a veto shows the United States weakness and their concern in the face of the developing situation on sanctions within the Security Council."

He said Iraq would step up efforts at every level to ensure the failure of the "U.S. pressure."

Meanwhile, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein met with Russia's ultra-nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy for three hours of talks which the Russian described as "interesting and profound."

Mr. Zhirinovskiy said in a press statement that the two discussed relations between their countries and efforts to lift the sanctions.

He is accompanied by a large delegation of Russian deputies and businessmen.

Walking in his hotel lobby over a mosaic portrait of former U.S. President George Bush, Mr. Zhirinovskiy smiled broadly as he left Baghdad's smartest hotel, the

Al Rashid. Black limousines waited outside and ferried him to meetings with ministers of foreign affairs, finance, oil, trade and industry and minerals.

The official Al Qadisiya daily said Deputy Premier Tareq Aziz thanked Mr. Zhirinovskiy for "the role he played in cementing ties of cooperation and friendship with Russia."

Ms. Albright said in Prague on Monday that Washington had enough support on the Security Council to block any move to ease sanctions on Iraq.

In a reference to Russia and France, Ms. Albright also said she hoped council members who wanted a premature change to the sanctions regime would change their minds when they saw the strength of opposition.

"There are members of the council who would like to see some change in the regime," Ms. Albright told reporters during a visit to the Czech republic, one of the 10 rotating members of the council.

But Ms. Albright, who is touring council member countries to drum up support over a mosaic portrait of former U.S. President George Bush, said that any such move could be blocked under Security Council rules.

"I must say that my trip has been very encouraging," she

said after meeting Czech Foreign Minister Josef Zielenka.

"I think that those who have intentions of moving this in a premature way will desert once they see that we have not only the blocking seven (votes) but probably a majority of the council on this very important issue," she said.

Ms. Albright during a visit to Kuwait said she had told the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, that Washington would use its veto "if necessary" on the Security Council to keep up the sanctions.

In remarks published in state-run newspapers on Monday, President Saddam vowed not to let the sanctions that have devastated the Iraqi economy hinder reconstruction.

"The embargo is a weapon in the hands of the opponent," he said.

"Iraq's huge natural resources and real wealth are sufficient to make the embargo something of the past."

President Saddam, whose remarks made no direct reference to Ms. Albright's tour, said the Iraqi government had honoured whatever pledges it had made in the past.

(Continued on page 7)

Shin Bet embroiled in wiretap scandal

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's Shin Bet security service is embroiled in scandal for allegedly tapping off a senior politician under investigation that his telephone was tapped.

Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair was reported Sunday to be investigating the charges, after Police Minister Moshe Shalev said he was worried about other possible cases of interference.

The publicity reflected an unprecedented degree of scrutiny about an agency once worshipped as a guardian angel of Israeli security. Its very existence was once a state secret.

The scandal emerged last week during the corruption trial of former Interior Minister Arye Deri, who is accused of illegally funneling money to religious councils in the early 1990s.

Prosecution witness Yaakov Shmuelovitz, a former associate of the defendant, said Mr. Deri and others knew they were on a list of police wiretaps because Shin Bet agents leaked them the information in 1991.

Top Israeli officials clamoured for an investigation.

"If there is a leak in a sensitive area of this type... this obligates us to know," Mr. Shalev said. "There could be a much more serious problem than this is not an isolated past incident."

Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni said the revelations were "horrible and shocking, totally opposed to proper government."

Israeli media reported Mr. Ben-Yair was "looking into" the charges but had not decided yet about a full-fledged inquiry. He was not available for comment.

It was not the first time that the Shin Bet was under fire, but the first in years linking it to political scandal.

Exposure of the Shin Bet used to be strictly forbidden by Israel's military censor. The censorship has been eased since 1984, when the agency was criticised after two agents were accused of covering up the beating deaths of two Palestinian bus hijackers. Shin Bet head

Avraham Shalom was forced to resign.

A subsequent inquiry commission headed by Supreme Court Justice Moshe Landau severely criticised the Shin Bet in 1987 for more than 16 years of systematic perjury, and demanded a housecleaning.

Mr. Landau also stirred controversy by authorising a so-called use of "moderate physical pressure" against Palestinian detainees.

A top security official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press agency activities have been under tight controls ever since, and that it has been more open to the media.

"It's better to give out information than have it leak out partially and inaccurately," he said.

"It is becoming more and more open," admitted Uri Avnery, a former liberal lawmaker and prominent editor, recalling the commotion raised in the 1950s when his Haolam Hazeh weekly first reported on Shin Bet, referring to it as "the dark apparatus."

Another sign of the new openness was unprecedented public debate about the appointment of a new security chief who was sworn in at a closed-door ceremony.

The new chief, who may only be referred to as K., is an expert on Israeli extremists.

Two top Shin Bet officials resigned in protest of the appointment, while Jewish settlers in the West Bank complained that he would target them more than Palestinians.

A copy of K.'s 1990 master's thesis at Haifa University, obtained by the Associated Press, discloses his concerns about the settlers.

"The ideological crimes of the extreme right are a direct and real threat to Israeli law and Israel's existence as a democratic and free state," the paper said.

"Israel's society and government not only fail to defend themselves against this activity, but are reconciled to it," it added.

U.S. Jewish leaders want embassy moved to Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Top American Jewish leaders on Sunday said the United States should move its embassy from Tel Aviv to occupied Jerusalem.

"We believe the American embassy belongs in Jerusalem," said Malcolm Hoenlein, vice chairman of the visiting Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the top body representing U.S. Jews.

Conference Chairman Lester Pollack said there was a "movement" within the U.S. government to move the embassy.

"The American Jewish community has been unequivocal... that Jerusalem is eternal capital of Israel," Pollack said.

Only a handful of countries established embassies in Jerusalem. Most, like the U.S., have located their representations in Tel Aviv.

An issue has been raised by Israel's supporters.

Senators Alfonse D'Amato and Daniel Patrick Moynihan recently drafted an appeal to Secretary of State Warren Christopher urging the embassy be moved.

But senior officials have said Jerusalem's status should be left open until Israel and Palestinians resolve the issue. Talks on the city are to begin in 1996.

Martin Indyk, the U.S. ambassador-designate to Israel, recently warned Congress that recognising Jerusalem as the capital "would explode the peace process and put us out of business as a facilitator."

Leaders of the President's Conference, considered an influential body in Washington, on issues relating to Israel, are holding their 40th annual gathering in Israel this week.

Mr. Pollack and Mr. Hoenlein, who met with reporters Sunday, also said they believed the American foreign aid package of some \$3 billion annually to Israel would remain intact.

Mr. Hoenlein said there was a strong consensus in the United States that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat was not upholding his undertaking to stem Palestinian attacks against Israel.

He said Mr. Arafat should "make a speech in Arabic to the Palestinian people demanding an end to violence."



A Somali woman who tried to take a mattress from the Mogadishu airport struggles with members of the Somali police. Somali police have been sent to the airport to prevent it from being looted after U.N. troops withdraw in the coming days (AFP photo)

855 kilos of hashish seized in Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordanian anti-narcotics agents have intercepted a large haul of hashish believed to have originated in Lebanon and arrested three Jordanians in connection with the foiled smuggling effort, security sources said Monday.

They confirmed a report in the local press which said the haul, of 855 kilograms, was concealed in secret compartments in a truck that arrived from Lebanon through Syria.

The interception took place last Thursday after officers of the Anti-Narcotics Bureau, apparently acting upon a tip-off, kept the vehicle under surveillance from the moment it entered Jordanian territory, the report quoted Colonel Nazih Shreideh, head of the bureau, as saying.

The smugglers sought to make use of the relative inactivity in the streets at the time of the usual Ramadan meal for their clandestine delivery, but were arrested promptly, Col. Shreideh was quoted as saying.

The hashish, which was discovered in fake fuel tanks attached to the underbody of the truck, is estimated to cost around JD 350,000 in street value.

According to Col. Shreideh, the hashish is believed to have originated in Lebanon.

Jordan, where the number of addicts of various drugs are estimated at around 7,000, mostly serves as a transit point for drugs and most of the hauls intercepted by officials are destined for neighbouring countries, mainly Saudi Arabia.

According to local statistics, 1,620 kilograms of hashish were seized this year, in addition to five kilograms of marijuana and small quantities of heroin. Also seized were a small quantity of stimulant tablets.

The local daily Al Dostour said 104 people were suspected of involvement in the various hauls seized this year

and 85 of them are under detention.

Scaled down output in Lebanon

The U.N. International Narcotics Control Board said Monday, drug cultivation in Lebanon, a once-thriving industry, was reduced to just 13 hectares in 1994.

A reduced production of drugs in Lebanon means a reduced flow through Jordan.

In its 1994 annual report, the U.N. board congratulated Lebanon for suppressing drug crops but international drug dealers might use Lebanese banks for money laundering, Reuters reported.

"Lebanon has achieved big successes. It has not fully eradicated drugs but the success is a record," Ahmad Nada, director of the U.N. drug control programme in Lebanon, told a Beirut news conference.

"Attempts at drug cultivation did not go beyond 13 hectares last year. This does not compare with the areas that used to be cultivated in

the past," Mr. Nada said.

The U.N. report's section on Lebanon said: "The board highly appreciates the successful eradication campaigns in Lebanon, which put an end to the illicit cultivation of cannabis and the opium poppy in the Bekaa Valley."

Thousands of hectares were under drug cultivation during the war in a well-managed business that brought in big money for warring militias controlling the drugs trade.

Lebanese authorities and Syrian troops based in the Bekaa Valley have cooperated to suppress drug cultivation since the end of the civil war.

But the U.N. report warned: "The board draws the attention of the government to the danger that illicit drug traffickers might attempt to use the banking system."

It urged Lebanon to tighten border controls and urged rich donor countries to boost aid to help replace the drugs trade with other income-generating occupations.

Somali women march for peace after militia battles

MOGADISHU (R) — Hundreds of Somali women demanding peace held an unprecedented midnight march through the streets of Mogadishu after a battle between rival militias using mortars and anti-aircraft guns.

In a scene Somalis said they had never witnessed in four years of anarchy, crowds of young women in graceful red robes strode right into the battle zone past gangs of armed young men and their "technical" battle wagons.

"No more brother killing brother," they chanted, hours after rival clan militias fought each other outside the gates of the United Nations-controlled airport where foreign troops were preparing to evacuate the country.

The women tramped over the bloodstains of two bystanders wounded in the cross-fire of a battle that raged outside the Al Sahafi hotel where journalists in the city take refuge after dusk.

The fighting was between family groups of the Habre Gedir clan of Mohammed Farah Aided, whose militias battled U.S.-led forces in Mogadishu in 1993.

Somalis said at least three people were killed and many were wounded in seven hours of battles, but it was impossible to assess total casualties.

None of the shooting appeared to be directed at foreign troops in the U.N. bases at the airport and the port, where U.S. and Italian forces are due to arrive this week to cover the final evacuation.

Dozens of U.S. and Italian soldiers are already camped at the U.N.-held airport, but the bulk of their forces are

expected to storm ashore in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

Their mission, dubbed "Operation United Shield," is to pluck the 1,500-strong rearguard of Pakistani and Bangladeshi troops from Mogadishu's sea port and port at the close of U.N. efforts to bring food, peace and government to Somalia.

U.S. military officers say they do not fear a direct assault from Somali militias but strays from "spillover" fighting between clans could threaten the foreign forces.

Tensions began building outside the airport gates early on Sunday when militia followers of General Aided set up a roadblock and denied anybody entry.

Somali sources said a traffic jam of heavy vehicles trying to enter the gates built up along the road. The vehicles were apparently owned by Osman Atto, Gen. Aided's former financier and right-hand man.

Mr. Atto, a member of Gen. Aided's Habre Gedir Sa'ad sub-clan, has now split from his one-time leader. His "technical" later sped down the road towards the airport and dislodged Gen. Aided's militiamen in the battle that followed.

Somalis said the clashes between sub-factions of Gen. Aided's clan could reflect an internal crisis in his leadership of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) militia.

Gen. Aided has made no recent public statements. Somalis say he has gone into hiding in the same maze of streets where he lay low during a U.N. hunt for him in 1993.

Billiards craze sweeps Gazans

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Billiards may be considered a sign of misspent youth in many parts of the world, but it is the latest craze in Gaza where young men play late into the night with the approval of even Islamic hardliners.

With no cinema, theatre or much to watch on the small screen, the game has spread rapidly through the towns and refugee camps providing a desperately needed cheap source of entertainment.

Police have been moved to order early closing times and issue permits, but otherwise billiards is widely accepted.

The rules are straightforward: no women, gambling or alcoholic drinks.

"It's not that women are officially banned, but we would have to empty the place for them so that no one harasses them," said Saleh Abu Anzi, who works at one new billiards room.

"We also check people, just by their looks, and keep troublemakers out."

He said they had no need for guards, especially as "police and security men are customers here."

Members of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas check in on the parlours to make sure no one behaves in an un-Islamic fashion, and occasionally enjoy a game.

The group was suspected of setting fire to a couple of movie theatres during violence between fundamentalists and Palestinian police in November that left 12 people dead.

The sole billiards hall in town closed down with the intifada which broke out at

the end of 1987. It had a reputation for gambling and never reopened.

Now parlours with names such as the Union Club and the Sports Club have sprung up across the Strip.

"The closest we get to betting is when the losers pay for the game, or buy a round of soda," said Mohammad Zorieq, a policeman who returned from Tunis after the start of self-rule in May.

"It's a fine game, it needs calm and concentration," he said as more young men filed into the smoke-filled parlour to wait for their turn.

"I have two employees just to watch for knives, drugs or gambling," said Asaad Jarhoun, owner of a "cafeteria and billiards room on the outskirts of the Khan Yunis refugee camp in southern Gaza."

"Even some of the younger Hamas members come in for a game — sometimes."

Mr. Jarhoun said there were 10 more parlours in Khan Yunis which, like his, stayed open until the early hours of the morning before police last month imposed midnight closing.

Catering to low income customers from the nearby camps, Mr. Jarhoun charges two shekels a game, one shekel less than in Gaza City.

Still, he said players owed him a total of 4,000 shekels (\$1,300).

"I let the men who have no jobs pay me later — and they usually do," he said.

Billiards suits people's wallets, especially following repeated Israeli closures of the Strip in the wake of suicide bombings, throwing Palestinians out of work.

U.N. embargo crushes Iraqi middle classes

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The four-year United Nations embargo on Iraq is crushing the country's middle classes with sky-high inflation while failing to weaken the government of President Saddam Hussein.

"We can hold for another 10 years. We have succeeded in preventing the country from sinking into famine," Information Minister Hamad Yousef Humadi told AFP.

His defiance came as the United States launched a diplomatic offensive to turn back a growing tide of support to lift the U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright visited Oman and Kuwait at the weekend as part of a mission to lobby countries in the U.N. Security Council to withstand what a U.S. diplomat said was "premature" French and Russian moves to have the crippling oil and trade embargo lifted.

A European diplomat in the Iraqi capital said, however, that "everybody agrees the sanctions cannot overthrow the government, and everybody agrees that the middle class and the intelligentsia are really suffering."

Public officials make up the middle class in Iraq which abandoned its strict socialist economy in 1987 to encourage private enterprise.

They number around 935,000 with a total of six million dependants out of Iraq's estimated population of 18 million.

And it is they who are particularly hard hit by sanctions, especially in the country's big cities of Baghdad, Basra in the south of Mosul and Kirkuk in the north.

Since cuts in October government rations only cover around half of Iraq's daily food needs, the U.N. says.

A bonus given to public employees to compensate falling rations is now worthless because of runaway inflation.

The Iraqi dinar, which was worth \$3.2 before the invasion of Kuwait, now exchanges at 905 dinars to the dollar on the black market.

A tray of 30 eggs, which cost 13 dinars before the 1991 Gulf war, now costs 1,600

dinars. At 1,400 dinars a roast chicken represents half a month's pay packet for a minor official, one employee told AFP.

Retired officials are even worse off. The monthly pension of a former senior official can be stuck at 240 or 250 dinars.

Many are reduced to selling family possessions on the streets, such as books and pictures. Intellectuals make a few hundred extra dinars by doing translations while professors drive taxis to try to make ends meet.

Others take a risk by living off dollars that relatives have smuggled from abroad. The most desperate turn to crime, despite the threat of amputations for thieves, while their children beg in the street.

Another option is to seek a new life abroad, and many set off for neighbouring Jordan without being sure of getting a visa.

Meanwhile traders, industrialists, craftsmen and farmers are faring better under the U.N. sanctions.

The market in Mahmudiya, 25 kilometres south of

Baghdad, is well-stocked although customers are few and far between.

Adnan Khobeir Dayer sells shovels for 2,650 dinars there compared to 1,000 dinars a year ago. Sometimes he sells a couple, sometimes none, but says "thanks be to God" he can't complain.

Neither can traders in the wealthy Baghdad suburb of Mansur, where restaurants are packed full every night with the end of the dawn-to-dusk Ramadan fast.

Two million people depend on Iraq's private sector and a similar figure is employed with the ruling Baath party, the government, army officers and intelligence services.

If they are not all well-off then they are certainly not in need, one diplomat said.

"The people suffer and they desperately need some help, but the establishment is in a good mood," he said.

The U.N. Security Council is to review the sanctions in mid-March. Ms. Albright said the U.S. would use its veto as a last resort to prevent any easing of the embargo.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO
17:00 Le Prince El La Sirene
17:30 Que Le Mieux Gagne
18:00 Enuka J'ai Tout Faut
19:00 News in French
19:45 Portrait
20:30 Profiles of the Muslim World
19:50 Home Improvement
20:15 Road to Avonlea
21:10 The Nature of Things
22:00 News in English
22:30 Watergate
23:59 Feature film: "Blind Witness"

PRAYER TIMES
06:44 Fajr
06:59 Sunrise (Sunnah) Doha
11:45 Noon Doha
15:03 Asr
17:30 Maghreb
18:52 Isha

CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Safford, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622436
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 63551. Tel. 62543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 77220
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 68495
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan Tel. 811295

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
It will sunny with temperatures rising further and winds easterly light to moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.
Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5/18
Aqaba 10/25
Dhahar 3/20
Jordan Valley 11/23
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 16, Aqaba 24. Humidity readings: Amman 30 per cent, Aqaba 33 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Ghaleb Zaidieh 736011
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayeh 620115
Dr. Khalidoun Asfour 699440
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul 898140
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardous pharmacy 718336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salem pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 664945
Shimoon pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mohammed Al Hilo 279773
Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Zayed J'alin (—)
Khalifah pharmacy 955417

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Fire Brigade 192, 621111, 637777
Blood Bank 671010
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630351
Hotel Complaints 602900
Price Complaints 661776
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Receivers 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 660100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

Hussain Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Aklich Maternity, J. Amn 642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mallat, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shimsani 664171/4
Shimsani Hospital 669313
University Hospital 645845
Al-Mushter Hospital 672279
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Saib, J. Amman 755112/6
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queco Alia Hospital 666100
Aasal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital
Receivers (09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hiban Medical Hospital (09)999990
IRBID:
Princess Batna Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)277275
Al-Najios Hospital (02)271003
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)53200. 5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
06:00 Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:15 Agaba (RJ)
09:55 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:55 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:50 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)

DEPARTURES
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
(Terminal 1)
07:00 Agaba (RJ)
08:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:00 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
11:30 Vienna, Paris (RJ)
11:30 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:00 London (RJ)
12:30 Frankfurt, Jordan (RJ)
12:45 Cairo (RJ)
19:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:05 Larnaca (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:25 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:10 Kuala Lumpur, Singapore (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
04:20 Vienna (OS)
11:30 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
14:25 Rome (AZ)
20:20 Beirut (ME)
23:20 Amsterdam (KL)
23:50 Bucharest (RO)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)
06:00 Damascus, Paris (AF)
09:50 Damascus, Bahrain (GF)
10:15 Larnaca, Rome (AZ)
12:50 Vienna (OS)
15:25 Damascus (AZ)
06:30 Amsterdam (KL)
06:50 Bucharest (RO)

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/300
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 120/60
Carrot 100/50
Cauliflower 130/70
Cucumbers (large) 120/60
Cucumbers (small) 260/180
Eggplant 130/70
Garlic 110/60
Grape Fruit 380/230
Lemon 320/200
Marrow (large) 100/60
Marrow (small) 220/160
Onion (green) 280/160
Onion (dry) 320/200
Orange 450/330
Peanut 800/600
Pepper (hot) 750/580
Pepper (sweet) 420/260
Potato 330/220
Radish 120/80
Spinach 280/160
String Beans 750/450
Tomato 200/100

HIAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Dep. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Apple 700/300
Banana 680
Banana (Mukammal) 620
Cabbage 120/60
Carrot 100/50
Cauliflower 130/70
Cucumbers (large) 120/60
Cucumbers (small) 260/180
Eggplant 130/70
Garlic 110/60
Grape Fruit 380/230
Lemon 320/200
Marrow (large) 100/60
Marrow (small) 220/160
Onion (green) 280/160
Onion (dry) 320/200
Orange 450/330
Peanut 800/600
Pepper (hot) 750/580
Pepper (sweet) 420/260
Potato 330/220
Radish 120/80
Spinach 280/160
String Beans 750/450
Tomato 200/100



KING HOSTS IFTAR: His Majesty King Hussein Monday hosts an iftar in honour of tribal leaders and representatives of public and private institutions in Ajloun Governorate. The banquet was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, the King's private chamberlain Ali Ben Nayef, the King's advisor on tribal affairs Sharif Fawwaz Al Zaben, the Ajloun governor and the Imam of the Royal Court. The King and the guests performed Al Maghreb prayers together.

Press department director sues Al Majd weekly

AMMAN (J.T.) — The director of the Press and Publications Department, Mohammad Amin, is suing Al Majd weekly for allegedly violating the Press and Publications Law by printing an article that disparages the President of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, which reported the move said Mr. Amin is taking the weekly to court for violating Article 40 of the press law that prevents newspapers from publishing articles undermining Jordan's ties with other Arab countries.

was taken to court several times for violating the law, especially in areas harming Jordanian ties with other Arab countries.

In its Monday issue, Al Majd published a front-page article in the form of a Ramadan quiz that it attributed to the UAE president.

The newspaper said it received the one-million-dirham (the UAE's currency) question, "which seems to be written by Sheikh Zayed but most likely circulated by his opponents," via fax.

The newspaper said the quiz was very absurd despite the one-million-dirham prize.

France issues statement on shooting of envoy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Following is the text of the embassy of France in Amman statement issued Monday on the shooting incident in Wadi Mujib which left a French diplomat seriously wounded last Friday.

The French embassy wishes to highlight the following explanations about the assault last Friday, Feb. 24, on French Embassy Second Secretary Gilles Hein and his wife:

— The assault lasted for a period of 20 minutes from 12:30 noon until 12:50.

— Mr. and Mrs. Hein were taking photos at the rest-house overlooking Wadi Mujib, about 100 kilometres south of Amman, when they were attacked by two persons and there was nothing in the way the two French people dressed or behaved that prompted the attack. Mr. and Mrs. Hein were not eating, drinking or smoking and did not carry any foods or drinks. Generally, embassy staff members in Jordan know the local customs and are keen to respect them.

— The French embassy does not at the present have details about the motives of

the assailants, and the concerned Jordanian authorities are still investigating the incident.

— The primary evidence we have (especially that the young married couple were at the place in an unplanned manner) affirm that France or the French interests were not targeted by the attack.

— Mr. Hein underwent primary checkups and X-rays at Madaba Hospital and then was transported by a Jordanian Armed Forces helicopter to Al Hussein Medical Centre. He then underwent a highly professional, six-hour surgery there. The medical care he received at the centre was exceptional and Mr. Hein is no more in danger and is currently recuperating at the centre.

— The Jordanian authorities have showed interest in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Hein and towards the French embassy throughout the ordeal. This manifests the friendship relations existing between the two countries. The French community in Jordan was moved by all the solidarity initiatives taken and expressed by several Jordanian citizens.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Crescent moon to mark end of Ramadan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Chief Islamic Justice Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi Monday issued a statement calling on the public to watch for the crescent (new moon) for the month of Shawal of 1415 Hijri year which falls on Wednesday March 1, 1995. The new moon marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. The statement called on whoever spots the new moon to report it to any Sharia court as all such courts will be open until evening of that day. Should the moon be spotted on Wednesday, the next day would mark the first day of Eid Al Fitr.

Supply ministry officers to stay open during Eid

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Supply Monday announced that its offices will remain open in various governorates during the Eid Al Fitr holiday except for the first day. It said that any violation or acts of profiteering by the merchants and traders could be reported to these offices and prompt action would be taken against the violators of ministry regulations.

Rawabdeh, Oman envoy discuss education

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Premier and Minister of Education Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh conferred in his office Monday with Omani ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Ben Sultan Al Boussead on educational cooperation. The minister told the ambassador that Jordan was ready to second teachers from the Ministry of Education to work in Omani schools. He also briefed the ambassador on plans under way for overhauling the educational system in the country.

Britain presents equipment to PSD

AMMAN (Petra) — British Ambassador Peter Hincheliff Monday presented the Public Security Department (PSD) with a collection of equipment used in combating illicit drug trade. The gift was presented to PSD Director Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Al Udwan who voiced Jordan's appreciation. According to Lt. Gen. Udwan, the new equipment will enable police to uncover drugs hidden in vehicles. The ambassador said Britain appreciates the PSD's efforts in combating drug trafficking.

Israel tries to expel PNA policeman to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday refused to accept a Palestinian security officer whom Israel wanted to expel to the Kingdom across the King Hussein Bridge, and the fate of the man remained unclear.

Israeli media reported that Mohammad Jamil Issawi, a member of the Palestinian police force in autonomous Gaza Strip and Jericho, was brought to the bridge across the Jordan River on Monday, but that the Jordanian government refused to allow him entry.

No comment was immediately available from Jordanian authorities on the affair late Monday. It was believed that the man remained on the Israeli-controlled side of the King Hussein Bridge crossing. Officials have said in the past that Jordan would not

let Israel deport Palestinians to Jordanian territory. This Jordanian stand prompted Israel to turn to Lebanon as the dumping ground for expelled Palestinians.

Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Omar Khatib said Jordan had informed Israel that it would not accept the policeman.

"The Israelis should hand him over to the Palestinian (National) Authority" in Gaza and Jericho, Mr. Khatib told the Jordan Times. "Jordan has nothing to do with the man."

Ahmad Qouriea, minister of economy in the PNA, described the Israeli attempt to expel the man to Jordan as a violation of the autonomy accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Mr. Issawi was arrested by Israeli security forces on

Jan. 16 at a military checkpoint between Israel and the Gaza Strip.

According to PLO officials quoted in agency reports from occupied Jerusalem, Mr. Issawi was carrying a forged identity card and was suspected by Israel of attacking alleged Palestinian collaborators.

Israel believed that Mr. Issawi arrived in the Gaza Strip with a forged identity along with the thousands of Palestinian policemen who entered the territory in May last year when the Mediterranean strip and Jericho went under Palestinian autonomy, the reports said.

Mr. Issawi, a leading PLO security officer, is suspected of involvement in attacks on Israelis before the 1993 Israeli-PLO autonomy accord, Israeli security sources quoted by Reuters said.

They said Mr. Issawi is suspected of entering the

Gaza Strip under a false name and involvement in armed attacks against Israel.

Israel says Mr. Issawi, who once served on PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's elite Force 17, later joined a more militant wing of Mr. Arafat's Fatah movement known as the Western Sector, which is blacklisted by Israel.

Security sources said Israel had turned down a request by the Palestinian National Authority to let 400 members of the force, now residing in Jordan, return to the self-rule areas.

Palestinian officials had said after Mr. Issawi's arrest that his expulsion could set a bad precedent for thousands of other PLO officials now living in Gaza and Jericho.

Thousands of PLO fighters, retrained as policemen, returned to police the self-rule areas after Israel handed them over to the

PNA last May. Israeli radio said Israel refused an offer from the Palestinian Authority to take him into the self-rule areas.

The army refused to confirm or deny the report. The radio did not specify the charges held against Mr. Issawi.

Colonel Jibril Rajoub, secret police chief in the self-rule enclave of Jericho, denied Mr. Issawi was a member of the Palestinian police force and said he entered the territories on a tourist visit.

A senior Jordanian official said later Saturday: "I can confirm that this man neither crossed the bridge yesterday nor today (Monday)."

"On top of that, we were neither approached by the Palestinians nor by the Israelis on the subject," Reuter quoted the official as saying.

Father, daughter found dead after 10 days — authorities

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

ZARQA — The decomposed bodies of a 75-year-old man and his daughter were discovered Sunday by their landlord, police and Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports said.

An autopsy revealed that Abdul Kader Hassan and his 20-year-old daughter, Amal, died of carbon monoxide poisoning; authorities estimated that the deaths occurred about 10 days ago, the reports said.

A police official told the Jordan Times Monday that the inhalation of fumes from a kerosene stove was believed to be the cause of the death.

"We found Mr. Hassan's body in the bathroom, and his daughter's in her bedroom," the police official said.

A next-door neighbour told the Jordan Times that Mr. Hassan used to sit outside the house every day, "but all of a sudden he disappeared."

"I used to see him every day sitting on a chair watching us play, but we stopped seeing him ten days ago," Ahmad Silawi, a neighbour, told the Jordan Times, adding that Mr. Hassan's daughter was mentally ill, and she seldom left the house.

A close relative of the family told the Jordan Times that Mr. Hassan moved to the area five years ago after he had an argument with his sons about his daughter.

"Abdul Kader's sons wanted him to send his daughter to an orphanage because she was mentally ill, but he refused and preferred to live with his daughter alone," said the relative.

"It is too bad that nobody asked about the man, and that he was only remembered when it was time to collect the rent money," one neighbour said.

CDD statistics for 1994 showed that there were 362 suffocation cases reported resulting in the death of 34

people and injury to 455. Stove heaters accounted for 182 incidents which resulted in five deaths and injury to 20 people.

Police follow up on child killing

Meanwhile, the Public Security Department (PSD) Sunday formed a higher investigative committee to follow up on the case of the 10-year-old Zarqa child who was found murdered three days ago.

The body of Samar Hassan G. was found dumped near a pile of rocks near the Tabarbour area by a shepherd two days after the girl was reported missing by her family.

Police officials had said that the child had been sodomised and was strangled to death.

"At this point we have nothing to reveal about the case, we are still investigating the incident and when we apprehend the killer, we will inform the media," a police official told the Jordan Times Monday.

Tourism team to participate in Berlin travel conference

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in a five-day international conference on travel and tourism next month in a bid to promote the marketing of its tourist attractions, according to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities Monday.

An official said that Minister of Tourism Abdul Ilah Al Khatib will lead a delegation representing the private and public sectors as well as Royal Jordanian at the conference which is due to be

held in Berlin on March 4. The Berlin conference, which is an annual event, is considered one of the most significant specialised world gatherings and is normally attended by most countries of the world and numerous travel and tourist firms and tour operators in addition to world airlines, world transport companies and hotels, said the official in a statement Monday.

On the sidelines of the conference, the ministry will organise a special wing dedicated to introduce the visitors and the conferences on Jordan's tourism and archaeological attractions.

The Jordanian delegation will present documentary films and slide shows and will distribute leaflets and booklets depicting Jordanian attractions, said the official.

According to the ministry, Germany is considered one of the major European markets for Jordanian tourism. It said nearly 35,000 German tourists visited the Kingdom during 1994.

UNIMED office established at the University of Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — In implementation of an agreement reached last November between the University of the Mediterranean (UNIMED), and the University of Jordan (UJ), an office within UJ campus Monday was formally established to serve as a link between the UNIMED headquarters in Rome, and the UJ and other Jordanian universities, a UJ statement said.

The official name of this office is The University of Jordan Office for Regional Cooperation with the University of the Mediterranean, the statement said.

The office is located at the Administration Building and is affiliated to the office of President Fawzi Gharaibeh. Kamel Mahadin, chairman of the Department of Architectural Engineering has been assigned as representative of this office.

The main objectives of this regional cooperation office, Dr. Mahadin said, are to promote and encourage interregional exchanges, and to create numerous networks of training and research among universities of the region.

The office shall look into possibilities of cooperation between the various campus communities of the Mediterranean region, and shall contribute to increasing the involvement of faculty, researchers, students, and administrative staff of the UJ

in the various UNIMED programmes, he said.

In addition, it will be entrusted with informing faculty, researchers, and students on the various UNIMED programmes, and will circulate information and documentation to them on the possibilities of inter-regional cooperation within the Mediterranean, Dr. Mahadin added.

The office will also coordinate the missions and the various exchanges of faculty, researchers, and students from Jordan, within the framework of the European Union programmes.

It will handle all correspondence exchanged between institutions of higher education and research in Jordan and the UNIMED headquarters.

In its capacity as a unique centre in Jordan, Dr. Mahadin explained, the office shall act as a regional correspondent for the UNIMED Information Bulletin and the review entitled: The University of the Mediterranean.

Likewise, the office will follow up on the activities of the various scientific networks of which the UJ is a member, and will undertake deliberations on themes of common interest which would involve the UJ, other Jordanian universities, and the universities of European countries of the Mediterranean.

Speaking about UNIMED, Dr. Mahadin said, UNIMED, which was founded in 1991 under the auspices of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", is an association of 51 universities from countries bordering the Mediterranean.

It aims to enrich these highly specialised areas of universities which are present in this geographic region and to promote interdisciplinary post-graduate training, he added.

UNIMED's structure, said Dr. Mahadin, is based on both the mobility and the exchange of human and cultural resources, and it ensures a constant flow of information and steady relations among the participating universities.

This contributes to the ongoing process of integration between Europe and the Mediterranean area, he said. Besides its central office in Rome, UNIMED has branch offices in Rabat, Malta, Cairo, and Montpellier. New offices will shortly be opened in Lyon and Tunis, said Dr. Mahadin.

Together with the University of Jordan, the organisation of a three-day workshop in Amman is currently planned. This workshop is entitled "The Development in Industrial and Agricultural Fields."



Minister of Finance Basel Jarrah and U.S. Ambassador to Jordan Wesley W. Egan sign a loan for wheat purchases agreement from the U.S. (Petra photo)

U.S. lends Jordan \$15m to buy grain

AMMAN (AP) — The United States and Jordan Monday signed an agreement under which Washington will lend Amman \$15 million to finance a purchase of wheat and corn from U.S. sources.

A U.S. embassy statement said the agreement was signed by Finance Minister Basel Jarrah and U.S.

Ambassador Wesley W. Egan.

The credit will be used to buy 60,000 tonnes of wheat and 45,000 tonnes of corn, the statement said.

The loan, which carries two per cent interest for the first seven years and three per cent thereafter, will be repaid in 24 annual install-

ments beginning in 2002.

The \$15 million loan will be deposited in an interest-bearing account in the Central Bank of Jordan, and the income generated will be spent on "agricultural" development projects mutually agreed upon by the government of Jordan and the United States government, the statement said.

Iraqi, Jordanian parliamentarians discuss embargo, coordination

AMMAN (J.T.) — A visiting Iraqi parliamentary delegation and two Lower House deputies Monday addressed issues related to the U.N. embargo on Iraq and coordination between Arab parliaments.

Senate Speaker Ahmad Lawzi told the Iraqi delegation, led by Abdul Wahab Al Hiti, that Jordan will continue to back pan-Arab causes.

Jordan realises the extent of sufferings facing the Iraqi people as a result of the sanctions and sincerely hopes that the ordeal of the Iraqi people will end soon, said Mr. Lawzi.

Mr. Lawzi also called on Arab parliaments to coordinate their positions regarding regional and international issues in the meetings of the inter-parliamentary union.

Mr. Hiti commended the Jordanian stand vis-a-vis Arab causes and echoed Mr. Lawzi's views that the Arab parliaments ought to unify their stand and jointly confront problems facing the nation.

Addressing the speaker of the Lower House, Sa'ed Hayel Sour, Mr. Hiti reviewed current efforts to end inter-Arab differences and the role of the Arab parliaments at regional and international

levels to serve the pan-Arab causes.

He also discussed with Mr. Sour ways for promoting Jordanian-Iraqi cooperation in parliamentary affairs.

Following the meetings, Mr. Hiti told Jordan Television that Baghdad supported Jordan's drive to coordinate the stands of Arab countries' parliaments.

He said the Jordanian leadership has always adopted a moderate and balanced strategy in its relations with the other Arab countries — something appreciated by the Iraqi government and people.

Islamic council issues proposal to combat drug abuse, trafficking

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Concerned with what it sees as the rising drug abuse and drug trafficking problem, the Amman-based Council of Islamic Organisations and Societies in Jordan (CIOS) Monday distributed an 11-point proposal to Arab and foreign diplomatic missions in Jordan aimed at curtailing the serious consequences of drug misuse on world societies.

The CIOS statement, which was signed by council secretary general Abdul Latif Subaiti, suggested the following steps to be taken by various nations and organisations to stem drug trafficking:

1- Holding an international conference to work out a new international agreement binding to all countries.

2- That each country issue laws imposing heavy penalties on those convicted of illicit drugs trading.

3- Confiscating drug traffickers' fixed and movable assets.

4- Conducting medical tests on vehicle drivers to ensure that they are not drug abusers.

5- Conducting tests on job applicants.

6- Conducting tests on university students and factory

workers and dismissing those found involved in drugs.

7- Allocating large financial rewards to those who cooperate with the authorities in foiling drug trafficking attempts.

8- Issuing an international warning to countries growing plants used for illicit drugs.

9- Confiscating lands used for growing such plants.

10- Exchanging information among countries on means of combating drug problems.

11- Inflicting heavy punishments on firms that manufacture or sell such illicit drugs.

The memorandum accompanying the 11-point proposal coincided with the release Monday of a report by

the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) based in Vienna on the world drug situation during 1991.

The report included recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of the international drug control conventions.

The board, which regularly reviews the world drug scene and international compliance with conventions, focused in this report on how effective those treaties have been in preventing drug abuse and illicit trafficking in narcotics.

The INCB was established in 1968 as an independent and quasi-judicial control organ for the implementation of the U.N. drug control treaties.

WHAT'S GOING ON EXHIBITIONS

- ☆ Display of Bani Hamida new designs of rugs at the Bani Hamida House, Jabal Amman (Tel. 658696).
- Exhibition of oil paintings by Sabah Librahim at Al Bayraq Art Gallery, Sports City intersection (Tel. 688701).
- Exhibition of handicrafts by Hasmig Kuyumjian at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- Photo exhibition at the Friends of Archaeology Centre.
- "Young America" exhibit (with photographs featuring Americans of all ages) at the American Centre.
- Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.
- Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre.

South African government to crack down on lawlessness

ANC creates disciplinary committee

PRETORIA (Agencies) — President Nelson Mandela's government Monday read the riot act to criminals, announcing plans to crack down on violent crime and lawlessness after a meeting here with security top brass.

After being briefed on the security situation in the country, Mr. Mandela said in a statement that police would develop a "concrete plan" to address violence, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape provinces.

Extra police backed up by the army will be immediately deployed in trouble spots and "the removal of illegal weapons will receive 'urgent priority,'" including measures to increase security at borders to stop the flow of weapons into the country.

This, Mr. Mandela said, was a "first step."

"The government needs to firmly deal with crime and lawlessness," he said, urging all South Africans to "help nip in the bud" trends that could scupper the implementation of the reconstruction and development programme to rectify the wrongs

of apartheid.

As Mr. Mandela announced the plans, new statistics released by the police revealed that 38 people were murdered over the weekend in Gauteng province (the greater Johannesburg area) alone.

Although the security meeting convenes regularly, a crisis sparked by the Inkatha Freedom Party's (IFP) walk-out last Tuesday was also on the agenda. Mr. Mandela's spokesman, Parks Mankhlan, said.

Present at the meeting were Deputy President F.W. de Klerk, Defence Minister Joe Modise, Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi, intelligence head Joe Mkhabela and army and police top brass.

Mr. Mandela was reportedly concerned at the effect of the IFP row on the security situation in KwaZulu-Natal, where some 10,000 people have been killed since 1987 in bitter rivalry between the IFP and ANC.

The government, along with the rest of society, is acutely concerned about so-

cial stability, investor confidence and, above all, the need to protect the lives of all South Africans," Mr. Mandela's statement said.

The meeting took place against the background of increasingly violent protests by prisoners, soliders and a recent trend by demonstrators to take hostages to force their demands.

In the former Transkei tribal homeland this weekend soldiers engaged in a gunbattle with disgruntled policemen who blockaded the Eastern Cape province town of Umata with trucks, cars and minibuses to demand better pay.

Two policemen were injured in the skirmish and another 15 surrendered.

The protest followed a pay dispute at a military base outside Johannesburg when mutinous soldiers clashed with the military police who had been sent in to quell the protest. One soldier was injured.

At an Eastern Cape prison Sunday, a special police task force early Sunday stormed a prison cell and freed a warden

who had been held hostage for 72 hours by armed prisoners demanding their immediate release.

Meanwhile the ANC moved to shore up its image Sunday, naming a high-ranking committee to investigate a string of charges of corruption and lack of discipline against some of its most prominent members.

The African National Congress' decision-making National Executive Committee named no names, but Winnie Mandela could be among the first brought before the disciplinary board it established after meeting all weekend. Mrs. Mandela is a member of the committee, but did not attend the meeting despite orders to do so from President Mandela — her estranged husband.

Instead, Mrs. Mandela, who is deputy minister of arts, culture and science in her husband's cabinet, was travelling in West Africa, she told Mr. Mandela she could not cancel her visit on short notice because it would offend governments who had invited her.

'Red alert' reported on Peru-Ecuador border

LIMA (AFP) — Peru's armed forces' joint command put frontier troops in its month-old border battle with Ecuador on red alert Sunday amid a major movement of Ecuadorian troops in the area, a Lima radio station reported.

Peruvian authorities did not immediately confirm or deny the report, which cited military sources as saying more than 1,000 Ecuadorian troops launched the "infiltration."

The Radioprogramas Del Peru reporter, speaking from the Peruvian Armed Forces' Operations Centre at El Milagro, said reporters in the disputed areas of Tumbes and Bagua maintain the order came down from the National Intelligence Service.

Peru's President Alberto Fujimori said after spending four days in the border zone that "about 16 cannon shots" were fired over his head by Ecuadorian troops during three consecutive days of Ecuadorian incursions.

He said the Ecuadorian government had been informed that he would be in the area, and said the Peruvian legislature's speaker, Jaime Yoshiyama "warned them that if anything happened to me it would be a declaration of all-out war."

Peruvian officials had said Saturday they were stepping up security around the posts of Ciro Algeira, Mesones

Muro, Base Sur, Cueva De Los Tayos, border post PVI and Tizniza.

The posts are along the disputed 78-kilometres (48-mile) stretch of unmarked border in the Andes' Cordillera.

Both Peru and Ecuador have accused each other of starting the latest outbreak of fighting Jan. 26.

Ecuadorian officials denied Sunday they had embarked on any offensive, and said throughout the conflict they only had defended military posts they have maintained for years.

"We have had to fight without having to carry out certain actions, such as attacking Peruvian outposts, to avoid... escalation of this conflict," Ecuadorian Defence Minister General Jose Gallardo said Quito.

"We have devised a strategy to confront successfully, with the resources we have, a military power that is better equipped and has more troops than ours," Gen. Gallardo said.

Pope John Paul II is sending an envoy to Lima and Quito to back peace efforts in the border war.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro said Monday that Italian Cardinal Carlo Furno would go in the Pope's name to speak "with the highest-level authorities of those countries."

Gorbachev looks back over decade of perestroika

MOSCOW (AFP) — Freedom of speech, free elections, the end of Cold War: Mikhail Gorbachev is well aware of the gains made by the perestroika he launched in March 1985, and still thinks his political strategy could have continued to develop in easy stages.

Perestroika (reconstruction) showed the whole world Soviet society undergoing a deep restructuring.

"But you can find it already in the works of Lenin," remarks Gorbachev during an interview in his office in the Gorbachev Foundation here where he receives a steady stream of visiting politicians, businessmen and journalists.

But it is Gorbachev himself who will go down in the history books as the "father" of perestroika, unwittingly crafting the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a new Russia.

"The policy was not supposed to result in destruction right down to the very foundations," he said, looking back to the death of Soviet communism.

"At the beginning, just like Khrushchev, I thought we could keep the existing (political) system and that we simply ought to make it conform to the ideas of Lenin."

Nikita Khrushchev initiated the thaw of the 1960s after Stalin's death and earned a niche in history as an innovator, albeit as one who could be as timorous as he was vociferous.

Mr. Gorbachev says now he went further than he wanted to.

"I did not understand until after the summer of 1988 that it was a mistake and that one could get out of that political system."

Democratic ideas went galloping ahead of him and after granting freedom of expression he had to be constantly

running to keep up with the wave of liberalism he had unleashed.

There were often moments of hesitation. He waited almost two years until December 1986 to end the internal exile of dissident nuclear physicist Andrei Sakharov, and more than four years to order the retreat of the Red Army from Afghanistan.

Mr. Gorbachev remembers how the speeches of Communist leaders in the years 1988 to 1991 began to reflect ideological shifts. They no longer spoke of socialism, let alone of communism, but talked instead about the socialist idea or the socialist choice, he said.

But that more moderate language suddenly proved inadequate in August 1991 when Communist hardliners mounted a short-lived putsch which in three days finally freed the country, though President Gorbachev did not realise it at the time.

When he got back from Foros in the Crimea where the coup-makers had confined him to a dacha, he reaffirmed his commitment to the "socialist way."

But within days he stepped down as secretary-general of the Soviet Communist Party, and in December quit the presidency of an already defunct Soviet Union.

Reverting to the plus points of "his" perestroika, Mr. Gorbachev is pleased with the democratisation of the country and the end of the cold war.

"They are acquisitions which are still there and can withstand even being crushed by tank tracks," he says with great conviction.

But he thinks the current leadership is far from pursuing a democratic agenda.

"What is happening today is the negation of perestroika," he insists.

Rio carnival explodes into life

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Rio de Janeiro's carnival exploded into life late Sunday with a thundering wave of sound and colour.

Brazil's biggest celebration kicked off with fireworks shattering the tropical sky and thousands of glittering dancers twirling to a pulsing samba beat.

"Brazil, feet on the ground, never lose hope to see your life better," sang the 3,000 whirling and brilliantly bedecked dancers from the Sao Clemente Samba School as they shuffled down the specially built Sambadrome parade ground.

The school, one of 18 competing for a championship on Sunday and Monday nights, roused the 70,000 onlookers to a roar with hundreds of feathered and sequined drummers.

Divided into brilliant marching units of brown, green, pink and blue, the hammering shock the reviewing stand and deafened spectators.

Female dancers dressed only in G-strings, high heels and sequins gyrated and writhed on floats and twirled for television camera crews broadcasting the dusk-to-dawn parade live.

The Beija Flor School, paying tribute to 93-year-old former opera singer Bida Sayao, swirled down the course led by a 40-foot-high (13-metre-high) white float depicting dozens of angels blowing trumpets and singing, "shaking the walkway, that's excitement."

Rio's carnival parades began with complaints that the pre-lenten festival was shunning its roots in Brazil's poor black and mulatto population by featuring floats with blonde performers in place of dark-skinned ones.

Replacing the black or mulatto dancers of previous years, several of the samba schools, entered in this year's glittering carnival competition are featuring near-



A participant in the Rio carnival, carrying a replica of Brazil's 1994 Soccer World Cup trophy, dances in the street. Some 300,000 foreign tourists are reportedly expected to visit Rio de Janeiro during the annual carnival which ends Wednesday (AFP photo).

naked blond actresses and models.

The increasing switch to blondes and fair-skinned women has infuriated some carnival veterans as Leci Brandao, a 50-year-old black singer and feminist.

She says the samba schools are ignoring carnival's roots among poor blacks and mulattos. Instead, they put blondes on their parade floats to get more publicity from television networks covering the pre-lenten festival.

"There's going to be a face-off between traditionalists and brown-nosers there on the avenue," she told

Vega newsmagazine.

The chief object of Mr. Brandao's ire is Monique Evans, an athletic model with close-cropped blond hair described by Vega as the "android debutante" of the Uniao Da Ilha Samba School.

Even though the group is mostly made up of black and mulatto Rio residents, school director Paulo Cesar De Sa told Reuters the choice of Evans was a logical one.

"She's a beautiful person, a dancer, and she's part of the Uniao family," he said. "And her costume didn't cost much, it's minimal."

China dissidents stage bold comeback

BEIJING (AFP) — As the annual parliamentary session approaches, China's neutralised dissident movement is making a bold come-back to demand social justice, an end to corruption and extensive democratic reforms.

The calls come despite an intensive crackdown over the past year, with massive police sweeps in Beijing, Shanghai and elsewhere, leaving numerous activists — including China's most famous dissident Wei Jingsheng — in prison and all but silencing the country's dissident voices.

This week, dozens of activists have re-emerged to make three separate appeals for China's Communist government to reform its ways.

Veteran dissident Xu Wenli, who was released on parole in May 1993 after serving 12 years in solitary confinement for his "counter-revolutionary" role in the 1979 Democracy Wall Movement, called Monday for the party to end its autocratic rule and permit elections under a democratic constitution.

Recognising this was unlikely, he said it may be impossible to avoid a situation where "all kinds of nationwide democratic forces unite together and use all kinds of non-violent measures to force the party to

give up one-party autocracy in order to realise a smooth transition to democratic society."

Mr. Xu also called on the party to rehabilitate those involved in the 1989 Democracy Movement — "bloodily suppressed on June 4 that year and followed by the detention of thousands of people — punish widespread corruption, strengthen the rule of law and achieve equality between all nationalities."

Two other groups of dissidents have this week exercised their right under the constitution to petition the National People's Congress (NPC), which is to hold its annual plenary session here in early March.

Similar petitions calling for widespread democratic reforms were submitted to the NPC's last annual session, fuelling the government's resolve to nip in the bud a dissident movement that had begun in late 1993 to make its biggest come-back since 1989.

Some 26 prominent dissidents and intellectuals — including 1989 democracy movement student leaders Wang Dan, Ma Shaohua and Ma Shaofang — sent a formal petition Monday to the Chinese parliament, decrying the "extremely backward" human rights situation in China.

"We believe that the defence of human rights and social justice is a fundamental principle sought by all humanity," the petition said, listing three individual cases where the rights of Chinese citizens had been abused.

A separate petition, signed by 12 prominent intellectuals, called for measures to curb corruption within the Chinese leadership, insisting that a free press and independent judicial bodies under a constitutional democracy were necessary to wipe out graft in Communist Party and government organs.

"Corruption, in the form of trading power for money, has become the principal affliction, causing great public resentment and capable of leading to social upheaval," the petition said.

The signatories, included leading dissident Chen Ziming — released in 1994 after serving five years of a 13-year jail term as one of the "black hands" behind the 1989 Democracy Movement and two former senior editors of the official Communist Party newspaper, the People's Daily.

Many of the dissidents who participated in this week's appeals, including Xu Wenli, Wang Dan and Chen Ziming, have remained under heavy police surveillance since their releases from prison.

Hanks, Foster get screen actors guild awards

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. (R) — The Screen Actors Guild honoured Tom Hanks and Jodie Foster with its top awards in its first annual awards ceremony Saturday night in an evening of actors paying tribute to their peers.

Hanks was named outstanding actor in a leading role for his performance in Forrester Gump as a slow-witted southerner who leads a life of remarkable achievement. Foster was named outstanding female actor in a leading role for her performance in Nell as a woman learning to live in civilised society after growing up in the wild.

The award marked the second best actor tribute this year for Hanks in Hollywood's annual award season. He earlier won a Golden Globe Award, given by the Foreign Press Association, for his role in Forrester Gump, and while many believe Hanks is the lead contender for an Oscar, he was modest when quizzed by reporters. "I think my chances are one in five," he said of his chances of winning an Oscar for the role. Hanks last year won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role as a lawyer stricken with AIDS in the movie Philadelphia.

Taiwan to deport Filipina maid for having baby

TAIPEI (AFP) — A domestic helper from the Philippines will be deported because she gave birth during her employment in Taiwan, Labour Department officials said Sunday. Raymunda Bacay, 33, will be the first foreign domestic helper to be deported for violating the labour contract, which prohibits such workers from having babies and "creating nationality problems," the officials said. Ms. Bacay, who became pregnant during a vacation in the Philippines, will leave here Tuesday along with her one-month-old boy, Randy, her employer Yang-Chien Chien-Yun said. Ms. Yang-Chien will lose her permit to employ foreign helpers in future for failing to report Ms. Bacay's pregnancy to the Council of Labour Affairs as required under Taiwanese law, the officials said. There are an estimated 7,000 domestic helpers from the Philippines in Taiwan.

Florida surgeons cut off the wrong foot

TAMPA, Florida (AFP) — Surgeons at a Florida hospital amputated the wrong foot of a man who learned of the blunder while in the recovery room. The patient, in his 50s, underwent surgery at University Community Hospital to remove his right foot but it was the left one that was gone. Spokesman John Andrews said the hospital was investigating the mistake but he added that no details about the incident would be released in line with patient's request for confidentiality.

Back when I was 100...

BERN (AFP) — Switzerland's oldest man says that at 108, he's not as spry as he was at the century mark. Friedrich Garber said that it was at age 100 that he retired, ending a career that included stints as a farmer, milkman and mole-catcher. And it was then that he gave up his daily glass of wine. "It made my head spin," he said. Mr. Garber is one of more than 680 centenarians recorded in Switzerland's 1994 census, 570 of them women, according to the federal social security office. This Alpine country's oldest woman is Emma Turvoisin of Geneva, who will turn 109 in July 5. The Swiss longevity record is held by a French-born woman, Andree Fehr-De Boulay, who died in 1993 at the age of 111.

U.S., Canada, Australia ban smoking on flights

CANBERRA (R) — The United States, Canada and Australia will ban smoking on non-stop flights between the three countries, Australian Transport Minister Laurie Brereton said Wednesday. "The ban will be extended to all Australian international flights regardless of destination from July 1, 1996," Mr. Brereton said in a statement. Australia's two major airlines, Qantas Airways Ltd and Ansett Australia, had both endorsed the proposal, Mr. Brereton said. Smoking has been banned on Australian domestic flights since 1987.



Obscure singer wins San Remo Festival

SAN REMO, Italy (AFP) — The obscure, 23-year-old daughter of a local band leader who named her after a song made famous by Ray Charles won Italy's most prestigious song contest. Critics and the audience together voted Georgia Todrani winner of the 45th San Remo Song Festival. Her entry, "Come Saprei" (How Would I Know), won first prize. Her father, "Come Saprei" (How Would I Know), won second place and Ivana Spagna won third. The winner's father, Giulio Todrani, said he named his daughter after Georgia On My Mind, popularised by Charles — who was a guest at this year's festival. Madonna, Duran Duran and Sting also made appearances. Winning the San Remo festival guarantees big record sales and stardom. Nearly 20 million viewers watched this edition, a record. In the photo Georgia Todrani turns to the audience as she receives her award in San Remo (AFP photo).

Mexican opposition urges trial of Salinas for coverup

MEXICO CITY (AFP) — Mexico's top opposition parties demanded that former President Carlos Salinas face legal charges for an alleged coverup in the murder of his hand-picked successor, according to news reports Sunday.

Mr. Salinas, who was president from 1988 to 1994, has also been accused of mishandling the country's economy and causing the plunge of the peso after President Ernesto Zedillo was sworn in on Dec. 1.

The double trouble may well torpedo Mr. Salinas' ambition to be named head of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) which replaced the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade on Jan. 1.

The National Action Party (PAN) is demanding an investigation into a cover-up of the killing of Luis Donaldo Colosio, a Salinas ally and presidential candidate who was shot dead on March 23, 1994 after a rally in Tijuana.

As the candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) that has ruled Mexico since 1929, Mr. Colosio was a shoo-in to win the presidential race. Mr. Zedillo, his campaign manager, went on to win the August race.

Some members of Mex-

ico's political elite have long been convinced that a faction of the PRI was responsible for Mr. Colosio's death, as well as the September assassination of the number two PRI official.

"If we pull the thread, the investigation into the investigations of this assassination inevitably will lead to Salinas," said Deputy Raul Monter Ortega of the PAN.

Porfirio Munoz Ledo, head of the center-left Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), has demanded that the first investigator in the case, Miguel Montes, be tried in connection with the alleged cover-up along with Jose Cordoba Montoya, who was then-Salinas' top cabinet official.

Mr. Montes initially said more than one gunman had shot Mr. Colosio, but later backed down and said that Mario Aburto acted alone in killing the candidate.

Mr. Montes resigned in July and was replaced by a second led investigator, Olga Islas, who stuck to the theory of one gunman.

Mr. Aburto, a working class resident of Tijuana, confessed to the shooting and has been sentenced to 45 years in prison.

But on Friday a second alleged shooter was detained.

Othon Cortes, once again raising the specter of high-level political involvement in Mr. Colosio's death.

Attorney General Antonio Lozano, the first opposition member to hold the top law enforcement post under PRI government, announced Mr. Cortes' arrest Friday and said there was evidence of a coverup though his probe was still in an early stage.

On Sunday, Radio Red was reporting that three additional former policemen were arrested in the case in Tijuana. The three were former members of the Tucan group of former police hired as the security detail at the rally at which Mr. Colosio was killed, it said.

The government did not immediately confirm the radio report.

While Mr. Montes told the daily Reforma he was innocent of participating in any cover-up, he accused Mr. Salinas of being "more worried" about his political reputation than in getting to the bottom of Mr. Colosio's assassination.

The PRD has also accused Mr. Salinas of delaying a needed devaluation of the peso in order to help himself win the leadership of the WTO.

The delay meant that when

the devaluation did come, it was more destructive than it should have been, sending interest rates soaring and the stock market plunging, undermining economic growth and causing widespread bankruptcies.

Mr. Zedillo also inherited another problem that began during the Salinas administration: a 13-month uprising in the poor, agricultural state of Chiapas.

The Mexican army dismantled a rustic auditorium that the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) had erected in the Lacandon jungle near the border with Guatemala, reporters on the scene said Sunday.

The Mexican army has been pressing into rebel-held territory since early February.

In Mexico City voters turned out at about 5,500 polling stations for an unofficial nationwide referendum organised by the civic group Civilian Alliance to voice their views on the country's turbulent political scene.

They were asked to vote "yes," "no" or "no opinion" on whether Mr. Salinas should be tried for triggering the financial crisis; whether Congress should reject a \$52 billion international bailout

package; and whether the government should renew talks with and drop a military crackdown on the EZLN.

Zapatista rebels charged the military Sunday with terrorising civilians under the guise of putting down the guerrilla uprising in the poor southern state of Chiapas.

In a statement released here, the Zapatista national liberation army charged that while President Zedillo was talking about efforts for a political solution to the 13-month conflict, the army was carrying widespread human rights abuses.

The Mexican army has been pressing into rebel-held territory since early February when Mr. Zedillo announced a massive search for the leaders of the Zapatistas who launched a surprise rebellion on New Year's Day 1994.

Mr. Zedillo has since called off the search and urged a political solution but troops remain in the area.

"The army has systematically looted the homes of poor people and Indian farmers, robbed the stores, destroyed crops and poisoned their food," said the communiqué, adding that the troops were "sowing terror among the civilians" and making illegal arrests.

Adams to Major: Face-to-face talks the inevitable next step

DUBLIN, Ireland (AP) — Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams demanded Sunday that British Prime Minister John Major meet him face to face as an inevitable next step in Northern Ireland's peace process.

Mr. Adams told reporters, at the end of the IRA-supporting party's two-day conference at Dublin's Mansion House, that he expected Sinn Féin to be allowed to enter negotiations "just like any other Irish political party."

"It's only a matter of when," Mr. Adams said, noting that the leaders of all other parties had already had private meetings with Mr. Major.

Civil servants from Britain's Northern Ireland Office began preliminary talks with the Catholic-based party in mid-December, 100 days after the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) Sept. 1 ceasefire.

This month's meeting, however, was called off after Sinn Féin security agents thought they detected an electronic listening device in one of their negotiating rooms.

Last week Mr. Major and Irish Prime Minister John Bruton launched the two governments' complex "framework document" outlining a possible political settlement for the British-ruled

province. The Anglo-Irish package suggests establishing government bodies to coordinate policy between the north and independent south.

Pro-British Protestant politicians have criticised the plans while Sinn Féin, which gets about 11 per cent of the Northern Ireland vote, has welcomed them as indicating British preference for the gradual reunification of Ireland.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, Britain's chief official in Northern Ireland, earlier told the BBC that Sinn Féin could not go further along the negotiating trail until it secured a commitment from the IRA to hand in its weapons.

"If somebody comes to the negotiating table with other constitutional parties but is known to have Semtex (explosive), ground-to-air missiles, heavy machine guns, mortars and so on, the implication is absolutely inescapable that they are prepared to resort to former violence if they don't get what they want round the table," Sir Patrick said.

Sir Patrick said there was no hope of getting Northern Ireland's pro-Britain "unionist" politicians from the Protestant majority to sit down alongside Sinn Féin so long as the IRA retains its capacity to strike.

But Sinn Féin leaders made clear Sunday that, as

far as it was concerned, the next meeting with British civil servants would be its last, and that they had to discuss the Anglo-Irish peace proposals with Mr. Major and Sir Patrick directly.

"The time for hiding behind their civil servants has gone," Martin McGuinness, Sinn Féin's No. 2 official and the leader of its talks team, told the conference.

Mr. McGuinness dismissed the British civil servants' demand for the IRA to disarm as "without either logic or validity."

"We told them, just in case the reality had escaped them, that the British government and the British army had not defeated the IRA, that the IRA had not surrendered, and that the British government could not even remotely expect Sinn Féin to deliver that surrender for them," he said.

The outlawed paramilitary group has extensive stocks of guns and explosives, mostly buried in bunkers in the Irish Republic.

Other speakers emphasised other demands of the Sinn Féin-IRA movement: The disbandment of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), Northern Ireland's predominantly Protestant police force, and the speedy release of nearly 600 IRA prisoners in both parts of Ireland and in England.



Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams signs autographs on the second day of the group's annual congress in Dublin (AFP photo)

Britain says the RUC should be reformed to make it more acceptable to Catholic nationalists, while there would be no general amnesty for IRA prisoners.

Milosevic rejects contact group plan Sniping halts Turkish leader's Sarajevo visit

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. peacekeepers alarmed by sniping refused to provide a plane for Turkish President Suleyman Demirel to visit Sarajevo Monday, but he planned to try to use his own aircraft.

Bosnian Serb forces said they would not guarantee the safety of Mr. Demirel's plane if it attempted to fly over their lines, and locked anti-aircraft missile radar on a landing German aircraft in an apparent warning.

Mr. Demirel, visiting Turkish U.N. peacekeepers in central Bosnia, told reporters in the Adriatic port of Split that he would continue efforts to reach Sarajevo.

"If I can go with my (own) plane, I will go with my plane," he said.

U.N. spokesman Garry Coward said the air company which operates U.N. flights to Sarajevo turned down Mr. Demirel because of the risk to the passengers and crew.

An aircraft carrying his advance party was shot at Saturday at Sarajevo Airport.

Peacekeepers blamed a rise in sniping incidents on the planned visit by the Turkish leader, whose government supports the Muslim-led Bosnian authorities in their war with Serbs.

Turks, who occupied Serbia and Bosnia for 500 years, are still regarded by Serbs as a traditional enemy.

Bosnian Serbs forced Pope John Paul to cancel a pilgrimage to Sarajevo last year by refusing to guarantee he would not be harmed.

They have anti-aircraft batteries within range of the U.N. controlled airport and effectively dictate who can

land there. The German plane which came under Serb tracking was fitted with equipment which can detect anti-aircraft radar.

It was not shot at and landed safely, but U.N. sources said the incident carried a clear message for Mr. Demirel.

Sarajevo has suffered a steady increase in shooting incidents despite a ceasefire signed by both sides in the three-year conflict.

An anti-tank rocket killed a woman when it hit her home early Monday and four people were wounded when sniper fire raked a tram in the city.

Officials of the big power contact group pursuing a settlement of the war will meet in Paris Wednesday following rejection by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic of a plan to give impetus to the negotiations.

Diplomatic sources said Mr. Milosevic refused an offer to suspend U.N. sanctions against Serbian-led rump Yugoslavia in return for recognition of Croatia and Bosnia.

Mr. Milosevic wants the trade and oil sanctions, which have slowed Yugoslavia's economy to walking pace, lifted first before joining any further peace initiatives.

The sources said he refused to compromise in talks last week with big power envoys sent to Belgrade to coax him into agreement.

Contact group countries — the United States, Russia, France, Germany and Britain — fear the Bosnian war could resume when the ceasefire expires at the end of April unless they can make di-

plomatic progress. In Vienna, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali, starting a five-day visit to Vienna, expressed optimism Monday that the United Nations would find a settlement for the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia.

Dr. Ghali, who held talks with Austrian President Thomas Klestil and Foreign Minister Alois Mock, also said the U.N. would step up its activities in Vienna and Geneva in order to take account of "world globalisation."

"We do not underestimate the difficulties" in ex-Yugoslavia, Dr. Ghali said. But he added that the U.N. would "be able to find a global solution for the territories of former Yugoslavia."

Mr. Mock told reporters that he had drawn Dr. Ghali's attention to "the growing risk of the rise of fundamentalist movements in the Balkans."

Meanwhile French military experts said the northeast Bosnian enclave of Bihac, where mainly Muslim government forces are under severe pressure from Bosnian and Croatian Serbs, will be the first victim of a U.N. pullout from Croatia.

However they would not go along with alarmist United Nations predictions that the withdrawal from Croatia demanded by Zagreb by the end of March would lead to a general war in the Balkans.

"Bihac is not viable" once the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) leaves the neighbouring self-proclaimed Croatian-Serb Republic of Krajina, a French military source said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Pakistan police arrest 50 suspected militants

KARACHI (Agencies) — Police have arrested at least 50 suspected Muslim militants in connection with sectarian violence and searched for additional suspects Monday in this troubled port city.

The suspects belong to hardline Sunni and Shi'ite Muslim groups that have been linked to the escalating sectarian feud in Karachi, the country's largest city.

More than 30 people were gunned down in Karachi over the weekend, including 22 who died in shootings at mosques.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has vowed to crack down on the sectarian strife, but citizens have little confidence in her government or the police force.

"The government administration in Karachi has collapsed," said Jamil Yousef, co-chairman of the Police-Citizens Liaison Committee, a private group that assists law enforcement officers.

"The killings could have been stopped had the government taken some preventive measures," he said of the weekend slaughter.

The city was still tense Monday, but most businesses were open and operating normally. Police and paramilitary forces patrolled the streets and continued to search for suspects.

The 50 that were arrested

Sunday were undergoing questioning, police said. They belong to either Sipah-E-Sahaba, a Sunni group, or Tehrik-E-Jafria, a Shi'ite faction.

The two factions have been fighting for the past year, leaving hundreds dead. The conflict is one of several ongoing battles in Karachi, where religious, political and ethnic fighting has claimed well over 1,000 lives since the beginning of 1994.

Sipah-E-Sahaba is led by Azam Tariq, a fiery orator and a member of parliament who went into hiding last week shortly before the government issued a warrant for his arrest on murder charges. The group has outraged Shi'ites by saying that they should not be considered Muslims.

Tehrik-E-Jafria was created in the early 1980s to safeguard the interests of Shi'ites, who account for about 10 to 15 per cent of Pakistan's population. Sunnis account for more than 80 per cent.

Meanwhile two Pakistani Christians facing death threats from militant Muslims after they were acquitted of blasphemy have flown to Germany, airline sources said Monday.

Salamat Masih, 14, and Rehmat Masih, 40, whose death sentences were overturned by the Lahore High

Court Thursday, left Islamabad in secrecy on a Pakistan International Airlines flight to Frankfurt, the sources said.

Officials said the pair, unrelated but both bearing the name, Masih — which is common among Pakistani Christians, had left Lahore Central Jail late Friday, but would not say where they had gone.

A spokesman at the German embassy in Islamabad said they had applied for visitor's visas, which had been granted. He could not say whether Germany was their final destination.

A U.S. embassy spokesman denied a newspaper report that they were on their way to the United States, saying, "That's nonsense."

Danish Foreign Minister Niels Helveg Petersen said Sunday his country was prepared to offer asylum to the two Christians.

"And any problem with raising money for the plane ticket can easily be solved," Mr. Petersen told Danish Radio.

"The 14-year-old Salamat Masih cannot go back to his village and it is probably too dangerous for him to stay in Pakistan. He must be brought to safety abroad," the boy's lawyer Hina Jilani told Danish Radio.

About 100 Pakistani human rights activists staged a

silent demonstration outside parliament Monday to demand repeal of the Blasphemy Law under which the Christians were sentenced.

"Religion teaches peace, not murder," read one placard held by a demonstrator. Others handed out leaflets which said the plight of minorities posed a threat to Pakistan's legitimacy.

"All of us citizens should raise our voice against the growing intolerance and bigotry in this society," it said.

Muslim militants staged violent protests in Lahore last week, demanding the death sentences be upheld and threatening to kill the two Christians if they were acquitted.

They were convicted on Feb. 9 after a village imam accused them of scrawling blasphemous remarks on the wall of a mosque and on pieces of paper thrown into the mosque.

A third Christian, Manzoor Masih, accused of blasphemy in the same incident, was shot dead outside a Lahore court in April 1994. Salamat Masih and Rehmat Masih were wounded in the attack.

Another Christian, Gul Masih, who had a death sentence for blasphemy overturned by the Lahore High Court in a separate case last year, took refuge in Germany after his release.

U.N. says drug abuse growing in U.S., former S. Union

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — Drug use is on the rise among American high school seniors, overall in the former Soviet Union and in many European, Latin American and Asian countries, says a United Nations report charting world-wide abuse.

The report of the International Narcotics Control Board released Monday praised governments of more than a dozen countries for their efforts in combating illicit drug trading and use.

But the U.N. panel, in its 1994 survey, noted only a few successes in checking the spread of narcotics. And in many regions, it linked the spread of AIDS to the growth of intravenous drug use.

In the United States, "the incidence of drug abuse increased ... among pupils in their final year of secondary school, reversing a downward trend observed in the last several years," said the 62-page report.

It said that a third of all reported AIDS cases involving American adults or adolescents were attributable to drug abuse, while more than 70 per cent of women with the HIV virus were infected by contaminated needles while injecting drugs.

Heroin seizures grew both in the United States and in Canada, said the panel, indirectly suggesting greater availability. And it said the purity level of heroin in both countries "has increased to several times that of a decade ago."

In the former Soviet republics, the study noted a link activity, such as money laundering. Such activities are "particularly harmful" to economies in transition from central planning to capitalism, it said.

The report spoke of an alarming increase in the manufacture of synthetic drugs in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova — the former European republics of the Soviet Union — and "large-scale" cannabis abuse in Russia, Ukraine and Moldova.

The smoking of cannabis also increased in several other European countries, most of them former Soviet Bloc states, said the report. Even more alarming was a record high level of heroin seizures of more than eight tonnes for all of Europe over 1993, with nearly 90 per cent originating in the border area of Afghanistan and Pakistan and cross-shipping through Iran.

Though some European countries report declining heroin use among youths, Europe in general is struggling with growing crack cocaine use.

Surviving in Grozny — a test of endurance and wits

GROZNY, Russia (AFP) — Surviving in the ruins of this war-battered Chechen capital has become a supreme test of the endurance skills and wits of the 100,000 residents officially still living here after 11 weeks of war.

The Russian military doles out small rations to residents, and soldiers sometimes add donations out of their own supplies. But there is no running water or power, and normal life seems a distant memory.

"We're like hostages here. It's like a second Afghan War. I lost my son in that war and now this," Yelena, an elderly Russian woman says, huddled inside a soldier's jacket much too big for her.

Many neighbourhoods of Grozny, including the industrial sector, are bombed-out wastelands. There is just one bread factory left, but bread deliveries are difficult because transport is hardly functioning.

Yuri, a Ukrainian, says: "Problem number one is the lack of water." He is one of the lucky ones. His apartment building in the Staropromyskovskoye neighbourhood was hardly touched in the fighting.

Wandering near a Russian distribution point for aid, an old woman, her eyes red from weeping, asks everybody she sees whether they know what has become of her children.

She is directed to an information centre which tries to make contact between refugees and their families, and offers free mailing and telegram facilities.

Anna Fedorovna, 65, says: "We have the right to food

aid, mainly flour, sugar and tea." She has lived in the basement of her apartment block, since the building was destroyed by a shell.

Vera, a retired Russian nurse, adds: "Thankfully, the Russian soldiers give us water, bread and canned foods to supplement the aid hand-outs."

She says she won some goodwill from the soldiers by "giving them my last pot of jam." She can't leave Grozny because she has no family and no money.

Many Chechen residents of Grozny, however, tell a different story of Russian soldiers running amok — looting, heating people up and sometimes murdering them.

The Russian authorities admitted last week that Russian military prosecutors in Grozny have charged servicemen with theft, robbery and looting following seven incidents.

The charges were the first reported by the authorities since Russian forces began attacking Grozny over the New Year's weekend.

They finally took control of most of the city in mid-February after an intense campaign of bombing and shelling that sent many thousands of refugees streaming away to neighbouring communities.

Many returned in mid-February during a seven-day ceasefire to reclaim their property and possessions, but found their houses had been bombed, vandalised and occupied by Russian troops.

Vakha, a Chechen woman, told AFP earlier that she found a group of Russian OMON forces installed in her home. "They said it wasn't

my house any more and that I should get out," she said.

A neighbour, Kursum Vakhaeva, 36, said he had seen Russian soldiers stripping a house and piling its contents in their tank.

But an army of Grozny's ragged elderly appears as if from nowhere each time a Russian aid truck comes into sight, unloading sacks of rice and flour plus condensed milk for children.

Some of the food aid has begun to find its way onto the small street markets that are beginning to appear again.

Elderly women can be seen keeping guard over scraggly-looking chickens, chasing away the stray dogs who roam everywhere.

Cars are rarely seen. They feel their way cautiously around bomb craters and military convoys. Exhausted-looking civilians push battered baby carriages loaded with canisters of water.

A group of 50 residents anxious to leave Grozny try to get onto an aid convoy returning to the Russian military base of Mozdok, in neighbouring South Ossetia. Mainly women, children and old folks, they are carefully questioned.

The men have to bare their right shoulder because, says a Russian guard, "We have to make sure that they are not rebel soldiers. If they are, they will have a mark on their right shoulder from carrying a firearm."

A Russian journalist arrived in Nazran Sunday after escaping from the southern suburbs of Grozny on foot — bringing with her a girl aged 11 and a message: Stop shooting. There are only civilians here."

Julia Kalinina, a writer for the Moscow daily Moskovsky Komсомолец, was guided out of Chernorechye, a district of Grozny, under constant Russian shellfire, by a Chechen escort Saturday evening.

She said on her arrival at Nazran, capital of the Russian Republic of Ingushetia: "There are no (Chechen) fighters there (in Chernorechye) any more. But the Russians won't move in. They just keep shooting."

Chernorechye is a residential suburb on Grozny's southern outskirts which had been the last holdout for Chechen separatist rebels in the capital after Russian troops seized control of most of Grozny in mid-February.

Ms. Kalinina brought with her Yanna Aftayeva, one of the thousands of children trapped under constant bombardment by Russian troops which have encircled the suburb.

The Chechen fighters decided to quit Chernorechye early last week when the Russian troops cut off the last road leading from Grozny.

Ms. Kalinina was faced with a choice: To go with them, or to wait for Russian troops to occupy the area. She decided to stay, moving in with Yelena Aftayeva and her daughters Yanna, 11, and Elina, aged 6.

But the Russians never came. Instead, they began a stream of artillery and helicopter rocket attacks on the suburb which are still continuing.

During the days that followed the Chechen withdrawal, the residents of Chernorechye were completely cut off.

EU, Russia sign nuclear safety deal

BRUSSELS (R) — Russia and the European Union signed a nuclear safety deal Monday containing a vital and long-debated clause limiting the liability of western aid and equipment suppliers in the case of a nuclear accident.

The interim deal, signed by Commissioner for Eastern Europe Hans Van Den Broek and Russian Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhailov, clears away one of the main factors that has slowed implementation of an array of nuclear safety pro-

jects. Companies funded by the EU's Tacis Programme, designed to help the countries of the former Soviet Union modernise their economies and infrastructures, have long complained that the absence of a liability-limitation deal left them open to law suits in the event of a nuclear accident.

The nuclear safety element of Tacis has pumped 327 million European Currency Units (\$405 million) into projects in Russia and Ukraine since 1991, although many

have stalled awaiting clarification of legal liability.

"Though of an interim nature, the agreement signed will permit nuclear safety projects to proceed to in-depth phases and to result in increased safety improvements," the commission said in a statement.

However, the commission said it would continue to press the Russian government to take the next step and sign the Vienna Convention which confines accident liability to the operator of a nuclear installation.

Gore reiterates support for Claes

BRUSSELS (R) — U.S. Vice-President Al Gore reiterated Monday the United States' full support for embattled NATO Secretary-General Willy Claes, under fire over his alleged role in a murky Belgian bribery scandal.

"The United States has full and complete confidence in Secretary-General Claes," Mr. Gore told reporters after a visit to NATO's Brussels Headquarters.

Mr. Gore said he had not discussed the details of the scandal with Mr. Claes, but said he did not believe the accusations in the Belgian press and calls for the Flem-

ish Socialist to stand down as head of NATO would undermine his position.

"Not in my view, we strongly support Secretary-General Claes... who is doing an outstanding job in leading NATO," he said.

Earlier, a stone-faced Claes ignored a phalanx of reporters as he escorted Mr. Gore into the building. He then scrapped a plan to attend briefing alongside Mr. Gore.

Speculation has grown that Mr. Claes may have to resign after he was forced last week to backtrack on statements that he knew nothing about bribes offered by an Italian

helicopter maker to Belgian politicians.

Alliance ambassadors have publicly given Mr. Claes their full support but privately say they do not want his attention diverted at a time when the alliance is looking at expanding eastwards and building a new relationship with Russia.

Mr. Gore arrived at NATO headquarters Monday for talks with member states on a range of issues from extending the alliance eastwards to its relations with Russia.

Mr. Gore was met at NATO's front entrance by Mr. Claes.



Jean-Marie Le Pen, president of the National Front and candidate for the French presidential elections, gets ready to answer journalists' questions during a weekly political TV news programme (AFP photo)

Gerard Caccryron's questions during a weekly political TV news programme (AFP photo)

Eiffel Tower closed in anti-Le Pen protest

PARIS (R) — Staff at the Eiffel Tower prevented the monument from opening Monday in protest at extreme rightwinger Jean-Marie Le Pen using the Paris landmark as a backdrop for the French presidential election rally.

"The tower was supposed to open at 9 a.m. but since the personnel refused to start work, we had to defer its opening until this afternoon," a spokeswoman for

the tower's management said.

A spokesman for the 180 staff said they were angered that Mr. Le Pen, leader of the anti-immigrant National Front, was holding a rally in the shadow of the famous tower.

Protesters said the tower received 5.6 million visitors each year of all races and from all over the world. They recalled that Mr. Le Pen

proposes to expel some three million Arab and African immigrants from France.

The spokesman said the rally took place on a parking lot which was beneath the tower but did not belong to it.

The rally was held to see off Mr. Le Pen supporters leaving to campaign in the provinces for the two-round presidential election on April 23 and May 7.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English in the Jordan Press Foundation
 مؤسسة الصحافة الأردنية
 جريدة عربية سياسية مستقلة باللغة الانجليزية في الأردن

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
 MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
 MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
 GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
 Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4
 Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
 Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
 Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
 Jordan Times advertising department.

Trade with principles

MOSCOW'S SCOFFING at protests from Washington and elsewhere about its ongoing plan to help Iran develop its atomic-power programme is apparently motivated by economic considerations. Russia's minister for nuclear power, Viktor Mikhailov, was unwavering in showing his country's determination to go ahead with its bilateral agreement with Tehran to build nuclear plants worth \$800 million. About two hundred Russian nuclear scientists and technicians are reported to have already begun work on a nuclear power reactor at Bushehr whose construction was suspended in the 1980s. Other nuclear projects are also in the pipeline with Russian expertise and technology becoming the mainstay of Iran's energetic nuclear programme including the construction of a university research reactor and the training of Iranian nuclear scientists in Russia. Cash-hungry Russia is also selling enriched uranium on the international market and is reputed to be earning \$1.2 billion annually from this trade.

This Russian perspective on transferring nuclear technology and material as if it were an innocuous trade practice does not bode well for the efforts to breathe additional life into the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Moscow cannot remain indifferent to the threat of nuclear proliferation in the region especially when there are increasing efforts to make the Middle East a nuclear free zone.

Iran has of course every right to develop its peaceful nuclear programme. It also has every right to be free from nuclear threats from countries in the area, including Israel. As a matter of fact, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati assured Moscow as recently as last Saturday that his government supports in principle the extension of the NPT.

Still, Moscow must be part of the ongoing internationally coordinated effort by stopping from commercialising nuclear technology with disregard to the ramifications of such a policy on international and regional peace and security. The Iranian-Russian nuclear link can, for instance, fuel Israel's protestations that it can never accede to the NPT unless nuclear threats from Arab and Muslim capitals are checked first.

At the same time, Israel must also show readiness to play the nuclear game responsibly and to the satisfaction of the states in the region. There is every reason to fear additional nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and its outer rims as long as Israel clings to its present course of defying international consensus against the spread of mass-destruction weapons.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

ALL THAT Lebanon received as a result of its participation in the Madrid conference was further Israeli acts of aggression and more sufferings for its people, according to Mahmoud Rimawi in Al Ra'i. The writer said that in addition to maintaining its occupation of southern Lebanon, Israel is currently imposing a blockade on Lebanon's southern ports and escalating its raids on Lebanese territory. The Israeli government maintains that it is stepping up its attacks to force the Beirut government to prevent resistance attacks against Israeli forces and the so-called South Lebanese Army, said the writer. But in fact Israel aims to force Beirut to incorporate the surrogate army in the south into the Lebanese armed forces on the one hand, and to cause Lebanon to follow a course of action independent from that of Syria on the other before any talks can be conducted on the question of Israeli forces pullout from the south, argued the writer. He said Israel wants to deal with Lebanon separately and force Beirut to accept the Israeli conditions.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily said the Arab League, which next month observes its 50th anniversary, has nothing honourable to celebrate as its actions and performance over the past five decades have only led to its semi-demise. Mohammad Kharroub said that the league's Secretary General's recent visits to Arab countries have achieved no reconciliation among Arab regimes, nor have they succeeded in persuading the Arab leaders to convene an Arab summit where they can seriously tackle the numerous problems plaguing the Arab World. If anything, said the writer, the Arab League has only succeeded in involving itself as party to inter-Arab divisions and conflicts and in proving its impotence in handling questions of destiny facing the Arab Nation. Having failed to rise to the level of responsibility and to perform its duty in an acceptance manner, said the writer, the Arab League should refrain from issuing any statements about achievements in the past decades as these would be false and because nothing that the league has done so far serves as a cause of pride for the Arab World.

The View from Fourth Circle

Being courageous and decisive — with ourselves

By Rami G. Khouri

THE RECENT Israeli withdrawal from occupied Jordanian lands should have been something of a consummation of the Jordanian-Israeli peace agreement, and yet the atmospheres of peace between the two states remain peculiarly muted. Public sentiment towards the peace accord in Jordan is accepting, but not always enthusiastic. Public support for the peace accord is routinely expressed by officials and citizens alike, but privately there is considerable debate about the full implications of the peace agreement, and much hesitation to normalise relations with Israel.

I have always thought it politically unhealthy and emotionally contorting for a country such as ours — whose combined track record of humanistic development and modern political liberalisation is perhaps the strongest of any Arab country — to accept such a wide gap between public and private political discussion. The peace accord seems to have reduced the vibrancy and richness of Jordanian public political debate, while one would have expected precisely the opposite — that the combination of peace, democratisation and economic revitalisation would have sparked a vibrant new era of modern Jordanian history. That probably will happen, but it has not happened yet.

It is vitally important to continue to probe for the reasons of this situation, to understand them and to deal with them with the combination of intelligence, diligence and mercy that have always defined Jordanian political culture. I believe that the current phase of Jordanian and modern Arab history can reveal a great deal about our identity, and, therefore, about our most logical future national orientation. We showed great courage and decisiveness in signing the peace treaty with Israel. Do we have the capacity to turn these two noble attributes inwards on ourselves, and address our own society as diligently as we have addressed Israel? I think we do. I also think we must.

The two outstanding realities of the post-peace accord situation are that the government and many Jordanians are pushing ahead to implement the agreement, while many individuals and organised sectors of society are fighting hard to forestall normalisation. The deliberate absence of several dozen MPs from the last session of Parliament, to deny a quorum and thus prevent passage of a law to spur normalisation, was a rather profound if increasingly rare public expression of the political opposition to normalisation.

Those who fight normalisation, however, are fighting a losing battle. They are in the same situation as they were in at the time of the Madrid peace talks (November 1991) and again when the PLO-Israel Oslo accord was signed (September 1993). Then and now, they fight the terms of

the day's Arab-Israeli peace process; but they offer no credible alternative, and they are clearly out of step with the majority's willingness to see what the government policy can deliver.

Many people may think the process will not succeed or will collapse one day; but even so, they are willing to see it through, because a) they trust the Jordanian leadership, b) they genuinely want a just peace and are willing to coexist with Israel if Arab rights are assured, and c) they do not see viable other options. The peace process may not set off fireworks of joy in every Jordanian's heart or appreciably improve their quality of life in the immediate future, but neither will it dissolve or unravel.

Nevertheless, the anti-normalisation forces should not be ignored or dismissed as chronic complainers or hopeless dreamers. It is important to know why, for example, some Jordanians feel so insecure that they fear that Israel will dominate and ultimately destroy their Arab-Islamic culture, as well as gobble up their Jordanian economy. It is equally important to accurately assess the fears of some Jordanians that the peace treaty will isolate Jordan from its natural Arab hinterland and turn it into a protectorate of the United States and/or Israel. This is possible in theory, but highly unlikely in reality, in my view. But my view is not very important. What is important is that hundreds of thousands of Jordanians express these fears and concerns in private, to one another and to other Arabs.

All of this means a lot about our identity. It suggests to me that the pan-Arab component of Jordanian identity is asserting itself as a natural and very powerful reaction to three recent prevalent trends: a) the repeated reaffirmation of distinctly Jordanian national rights, needs and aspirations (land, water, etc.) taken in relative isolation from other, similar Arab rights; b) the government's frequent, high profile interaction with Israelis, Americans and American Jewish groups, while contacts with Arab parties may be taking a back seat for the moment, and c) the feeling among many that, as a consequence of the above two points, Jordan may be finding itself slightly isolated in the Arab World.

It is important to note that the main reason for opposition to the peace accord within Jordan is not about the quality of national rights that Jordan has secured from the deal. The main opposition relates to Jordan's place and role in the wider Arab World, and to our obviously cordial ties with Israel at a time when Israel continues to occupy, imprison, torture and kill other Arabs. The peace accord with Israel has emphasised how strong are the pan-Arab identity and political sentiment of many Jordanians — smart, street-wise men, women and children who naturally understand that genuine security and long-term develop-

ment prospects depend, first and foremost, on our integration into the wider Arab economy and national identity.

The peace accord, many of its opponents feel, is taking us in the other direction — away from our natural Arab hinterland and towards an unnatural association with, or even dependence upon, the United States and Israel. Time will tell if any of these fears are legitimate. It is a good sign that the government is working hard to mend fences with other Arab states, but this may prove to be difficult in view of the very strong message of the peace accord. It is troubling, on the other hand, that relations are less than ideal with our four powerful Arab neighbours, namely Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It would be easy but foolish to ignore these realities, or minimise their importance, or shoot the messengers who bring the bad news — but that would not change the realities and their potential consequences.

Our immediate challenge in Jordan is to chew on and digest these political facts — to figure out the most appropriate way to achieve the full promise of peace without creating permanent scars within the Jordanian body politic or between Jordan and the wider Arab World. The really important point that should be appreciated is that Jordanian domestic concerns about the peace accord are not ideological — they are visceral. They emanate from those mysterious regions within the body and the soul from whence human beings instinctively understand who they are and where they came from, whom they belong with, who will love them and protect them, who will stand by them, and who will feed their children and grandchildren and future generations.

It would be extraordinarily useful and constructive for the government and the opposition to the peace issue to engage in an open and ongoing dialogue about these issues, in Parliament, on television and radio, and in other available fora. The government should not fear such a discussion, because the peace accord is signed, delivered and (more or less) being implemented. What the government should fear, though, is a situation in which huge and vital issues that touch on the very essence of human identity and belonging are often bottled up and kept out of the public debate; this only generates the kinds of frustration and alienation that we have tried to reduce by making peace.

The opposition for its part should welcome such a dynamic, as it would clarify their concerns and allow them to impact more coherently on public policy; perhaps it would also help to adjust government policies in a manner that would strengthen national unity and allow the Jordan-Israel accord to act as a catalyst for progress on the other negotiating fronts.

Turning the heat on Iran and the Islamists

By Jane Hunter

INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES of a number of governments have been collaborating in the hunt for the bombers that struck Israeli and Jewish targets in Argentina, Panama and Britain last July. But even with the charging of two of the five Palestinians arrested in London earlier this month, it still seems that they are yet to identify the perpetrators, widely assumed to be operatives of the Lebanese organisation Hizbollah.

However, if the trail is getting cold, the atmospheres are heating up, as Israel, the State Department and U.S. Jewish organisations mount a vigorous campaign against radical Islamists and their perceived sponsor, Iran — a campaign that may be intended to divert attention from the conduct of U.S. and Israeli intelligence but could well divert U.S. policy.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said last summer's bombings were a response to Israeli attacks on Hizbollah in Lebanon. U.S. officials, speaking anonymously, told the New York Times the same thing. A group called Followers of God, presumably a Hizbollah creation, immediately claimed credit for the July 18 blast, which tore apart the Argentine-Argentine building in Buenos Aires, killing at least 96 people and wounding 200.

Nevertheless, Israeli officials publicly blamed Iran for the attacks and Israel pressed Argentina to do the same. Buenos Aires was close to rupturing diplomatic ties with Iran in August, when Argentina's Supreme Court quashed arrest orders for four Iranian diplomats issued by Judge Juan Jose Galeano. Outside observers believe Iran may well have provided logistic support for the bombings but doubt it instigated them. Visiting Argentina in early January, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made no specific comments on the investigation. In an October interview with an Argentine paper, Judge Galeano maintained that the evidence still pointed to the four Iranians. But he was having trouble locating the purported former Iranian official, Monoucheh Moatamer, on whose testimony he impugned the diplomats. Iran describes Mr. Moatamer as a common criminal.

Two senior Argentine officials quoted by the

Washington Post in October said U.S. intelligence officials initially gave Mr. Moatamer "high marks." He reportedly predicted to Venezuelan officials that there would be another bomb attack in London. The bombings of the Israeli embassy and the Joint Israel Appeal followed in July. Israeli officials at the time slammed British authorities for ignoring Argentina's warning, based on Mr. Moatamer's prediction. The London police commissioner appeared to acknowledge the warning in his report that "we were not specifically warned with any hard intelligence about any specific threats."

It is perplexing that in mid-October, as Judge Galeano was preparing to interview him, Mr. Moatamer flew to the U.S. where, at the request of the State Department, he was given a "public interest parole," a document that could indicate entry as an information or a court witness. U.S. officials will not comment on his situation, but a well placed source told MEI that he continues to enjoy U.S. asylum.

U.S. intelligence remains engaged

While Washington stays mum about Mr. Moatamer, U.S. intelligence officers have remained engaged in the Argentine investigation, which has also been assisted by officials from Israel and Europe. Last month, German, U.S. and Israeli intelligence officials were in Buenos Aires consulting with Judge Galeano. Earlier, a Buenos Aires newspaper reported that the government had hired two former KGB specialists in Islamic affairs and that its own intelligence agency planned to open two new stations in Muslim countries.

Publicly, the U.S. has turned the spotlight on Hizbollah. In November Philip Wilcox, the State Department's "counter-terrorism coordinator," said the Argentine bombing was "almost certainly the work of the Hizbollah," which he said, "has a well organised network of cells concealed in peaceful Shiite communities around the world, including the Americas."

For several months there were reports suggesting that Argentine, U.S. and Israeli intelligence, among other agencies, were pursuing Hizbollah members in the area where Argentina's borders converge with those of Paraguay and Brazil. The remote area is infamous as a haven for illicit activities and most of the 12,000-strong Arab community there is Lebanese. But the

most detailed news account — in the New York Times of Feb. 11 — rests on the unconfirmed account of a reporter for the Brazilian magazine Isto E. Mario Chimamovich, who says Israeli intelligence has determined that the explosives for last July's bomb came from a border region arms dealer. He also claims that a Brazilian, Wilson Roberto dos Santos, told him he worked with an Iranian group involved in the bombing and the 1992 bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires. In November Mr. dos Santos told a judge in Argentina that in August 1992 — five months after the embassy was bombed — he carried a suitcase of arms and ammunition for the group. But Mr. dos Santos later recanted and is now in jail in Argentina on perjury charges. Argentine authorities have arrested two dozen people — mainly of Middle East origin — but, besides Mr. dos Santos, only two Argentines connected to the vehicle believed to have carried the bomb are still being held.

The Panamanian investigation has stalled on a different conundrum: The possibility that, although claimed by the Followers of God, the July 19 bombing of a commuter plane carrying mostly Jews and Israelis was actually staged to murder a local Jew, Saul Schwartz. Mr. Schwartz was under investigation by the Italian authorities for alleged money-laundering for the Medellín cartel, according to Panamanian reports.

Authorities have reportedly determined that the only unclaimed body was that of a Lebanese passenger who refused to provide a local address and who was the most badly mutilated by the explosives. However, soon after the attack, Panama's then President Ernesto Balladras said it could well be linked to "illegal activities in the (Colon) Free Zone," from the Panama City-bound plane had departed. Reports over the last decade have linked the many Israelis and Jews who work in Colon to arms dealing, money laundering and sanctions-busting. Panamanian officials in the U.S. refused to comment on the current state of the investigation.

The fine points of the attacks in Panama and Argentina are the province of the cognoscente. From the beginning, Israeli officials in the West have portrayed the attacks as the work of enemies of the Middle East peace process. And that was the line that was hammered home in the Western media, which often lumped the bombings together with Hamas' violent campaign in the occupied territories and Israel.

This winter, Israel began to emphasise the dangers of what it calls Iran's crash effort to obtain nuclear arms. And last month, within days of each other, several major U.S. Jewish organisations issued detailed — and very similar — calls for an intensified international and domestic fight against "radical Islamic terrorism." Citing the July bombings as well as the 1993 bombing of

the World Trade Centre, the organisations called for legislation to crack down on Islamic extremists operating in the U.S.

The seemingly orchestrated calls for legislation followed what Forward, a New York Jewish weekly, reported, was months of "extensive" collaboration between officials of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations and the FBI to draft that legislation. In a Jan. 20 speech, Secretary of State Warren Christopher promised "new steps" to investigate and prosecute activities here in support of terrorists abroad. On Jan. 24, citing the Argentine and British bombings, as well as the recent suicide bombings in Israel, President Clinton issued an "emergency" executive order freezing the assets of and outlawing donations to Hizbollah, Hamas and 10 other organisations.

There are varying interpretations of the purpose of the Israeli and U.S. campaigns, which some long-time observers of Israeli lobbying believe are flagrantly hyperactive. The campaigns may well have their roots in efforts last summer to obscure the failure of Israel's much vaunted intelligence to crack any of the bombings.

Focus on foreign demons

Some observers suspect the recent push is designed to engage the enthusiasm of the new Republican congressional majority, whose inclination is to refocus U.S. foreign policy on foreign demons and militarism — and away from innovations like peace and multilateral action. Whether intended or not, the proposed legislation intrudes into long-established constitutional rights could appeal to the Republicans' yen to demolish what they characterise as the effete icons of the Democrats' long rule (such as welfare and appeals of death sentences).

The renewed emphasis on anti-Israeli terrorism parallels recent efforts by some Arab governments to make a common enemy of radical Islamism. And both the Israeli and these Arab stances are at odds with the Clinton administration's most thoughtful foreign policy. Articulated in regard to Algeria, the policy favours engaging ascendant Islamists and nudging them towards democracy, rather than defaulting into the role of "great satan," as the U.S. did with Iran.

This policy, with the implicit value it puts on human rights, is less attractive to some Arab governments than Israeli-style anti-terrorism, notes Graham Fuller, a senior political analyst at Rand, a prestigious think tank. Some Arab governments, such as Tunisia and Egypt, prefer the interpretation that Islamist political opposition "all boils down to terrorism," Mr. Fuller told MEI. "They see Islamism benefiting from a reform agenda." So might the Republican Congress.

Middle East International



"Don't worry... it's only a tiny shrub."

LETTERS

Homosexuality condemned

To the Editor:

IN HIS article, "Homosexuality justified!" (Jordan Times, Feb. 6), Waleed Sa'di speaks of homosexuality as a biological disorder that cannot be controlled, implicitly rejecting discriminating against it.

Prophet Lot also had something to say about homosexuals: "What! of all creatures, do ye come into the males, and leave the wives your Lord created for you... (holy Koran 26: 165-68)." So did Prophet Mohammad condemn homosexuals. "Darned is the one who commits the acts of Lot's people," he said.

Khaled Tulic,
 University of Jordan,
 Amman.

An era for innovation

To the Editor:

WITH THE signing of the peace treaty with Israel-Jordan has entered a new era; an era of innovation, prosperity and abundance. This treaty has been long awaited by our people who have undergone very hard times during the last 40 years of struggle. Now the pursuit of peace bore fruit. The countdown towards modernisation and social amity has begun.

The gains we have made from this treaty are many. Our territories have been retrieved and our borders have been demarcated.

The peace treaty responded to the rapid unfolding of events in the Middle East and to the growing awareness within Israel that there is a need for political settlement since violence can only beget violence. But the task is not over and a long road lies ahead before we could establish an abundant and prosperous life.

Hatem Shihab,
 Amman.

Isolationism taking hold in the U.S.

Ageing lords fight for the old order and America Firsters look to their own

By Martin Walker

ALAN GREENSPAN, the owl and cerebral head of the U.S. central bank, was unhappy about the president's request but he made the phone call anyway.

It was to Rush Limbaugh, the combative right-wing talk-show host. Mr. Greenspan offered a personal briefing on why it was important to America that Limbaugh not attack Bill Clinton's plan to rescue the Mexican economy. Mr. Limbaugh listened, then carried on regardless.

In a way, the incident sums up the strange, almost surreal plight of the traditional masters of the global order, the leaders of what is routinely described as the world's last superpower: "They are reduced to court- ing the new populists for support for their increasingly tentative decisions."

More than five years after the Berlin Wall fell, marking the triumph of a 60-year campaign for global hegemony, America has never been so integrated into the global economy it has, nor so reluctant about its implications.

The U.S. is now the world's leading exporter, with almost a quarter of its GDP coming from trade, and has a more export-dependent economy than Japan. A Clinton doctrine is emerging that locks the country into the new building blocks of the global economy in North America, the Pacific Rim and entire Western hemisphere.

But not since the 1930s has the United States appeared so ready to turn inward again, back to that isolationism which President Franklin Roosevelt said had finally been sunk at Pearl Harbour.

The new Republican majority swept into power in Congress, pledged to forbid any future American participation in United Nations operations without its permission. It has vowed to build those anti-missile defences whose promise of an impenetrable Fortress America so gripped the imagination of Ronald Reagan.

The new Republicans have little time for the traditions of party discipline. Their fiery new speaker, Newt Gingrich made common cause with Mr. Clinton and Mr. Greenspan to back the rescue plan for the Mexican economy, supporting a key partner in the North American Free Trade Area which the Republicans had helped devise. But Mr. Clinton could not deliver the Democratic congressmen,

Mr. Greenspan could not deliver Mr. Limbaugh, and Mr. Gingrich could not deliver his Republicans. "Not since Senate rejection of the League of Nations in 1919 has our power elite suffered such a rout as it has on the \$40 billion Mexican bailout," crowed Pat Buchanan, the conservative and unabashed isolationist who challenged George Bush in the 1992 presidential primaries, and is running again next year.

"The Mexican crisis should be a warning to what lies at the end of the big highway marked with the signs NAFTA and GATT. We are linking our economic survival, to regimes like Japan that use spies to steal our industrial secrets and non-tariff barriers to keep out our products. To regimes like China that steal our intellectual property and use slave labour to earn the capital to challenge the U.S. for world dominance. To regimes like Mexico that devalue their currency to rob investors and drive us out of their markets."

Buchanan's words are echoed by Democratic congressmen and in trade union halls around the country. The resentment of free trade is a bipartisan phenomenon, a populist revolt which startled Mr. Gingrich as much as it cheered Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Gingrich, after all, believes that American power has a global purpose. When he drafted the Republicans' election manifesto, the 10-point Contract with America, he deliberately included a promise of deeper international engagement. That is the part of the contract that Mr. Gingrich's foot soldiers have abandoned. Warned in congressional committee that an expanded NATO would require spreading the U.S. nuclear guarantee over Eastern Europe, they backed away from the demand that NATO membership be extended to Poland, Hungary and the Czech and Slovak republics by 1999.

What is left of the foreign affairs section of the contract is so much red meat to the isolationist wing. The Republicans call for the abolition of AID (the Agency for International Development), and the submerging of President Kennedy's Peace Corps into a bureau of a slimmed-down state department.

Forgetting that U.S. troops stormed ashore at D-Day, and fought at the Battle of the Bulge, under the command of Britain's General Montgomery, they



MISSION UNPOPULAR: Wary U.S. marines patrol the helicopter landing pad at Mogadishu airport, checking its security in preparation for the landing of 2,600 U.S. and 500

Italian soldiers around the beginning of March to protect the withdrawal of the last 2,000 or so U.N. troops from Somalia against

with "muscular multilateralism" in Somalia and Haiti.

Some, of a more historical bent, use the old phrase "America Firsters." Ted Galen Carpenter, of the libertarian think-tank the Cato Institute, is the most prominent advocate of the minimalist foreign policy which is influential among congressional Republicans.

"It's not isolationism. Unilateralism is the major feature. It is a more nationalist foreign policy, a much more selective use of military engagement, asking the automatic question: 'What's in it for us?'" he says.

"There are some interesting parallels with Gaullism, that America is a special kind of nation, with a special role and special obligations, all stemming from a unique identity."

"We want to benefit from our engagement in world affairs and from our leadership, but at the same time we are reluctant to pay the costs in the way we once did."

The advocates of traditional internationalist foreign policy are still trying to understand the speed with which the American political scene has shifted under the feet, and are warning that the new Republican approach is much more dangerous than it might look.

Charles William Maynes, editor of the quarterly journal Foreign Policy, and former assistant secretary of state for international affairs in the Carter administration, is worried. "There is now more danger of the U.S. returning to the pure isolationism of 1920-25

than I have ever seen. At the moment, the current is unilateralist rather than isolationist, but it will lead to isolationism, because we will not be able to carry the allies with us."

"There is a presumption that U.S. leadership will be indefinitely sustained because of the automatic following of our allies. But our allies followed because they were frightened of the Soviet Union. Now they aren't. They are frightened of other things, like Muslim fundamentalism in North Africa, which are far less compelling to us. The unilateralist current is so strong in Congress now, and the Clinton administration is so weak, that it cannot stand up to it. Congress has always been sceptical of the U.N., of international commitments, and successive White Houses in the past have always stood up to it."

Mr. Maynes notes that there was always an isolationist current in the Republican Party, based in the geographic heartland of the mid-West. But it was traditionally balanced and usually overcome by the New England Republicans, representing a European and maritime trading region, whose influence has steadily dwindled.

"If the U.S. based foreign policy solely on our vital national interests, we wouldn't have one, because in a sense, we don't need one. Protected by two ocean moats, self-reliant in food and raw materials, with a rich continent and markets to the south, this country faces no real security threat. No one could conquer us or destroy us without embarking on a suicide mission," Mr. Maynes says.

"So to have a foreign policy, you have to go beyond these core interests, and make the case that stability in Europe and in Asia and the Gulf are also parts of our vital interests. When we had the great Soviet enemy, that case was clear. It is much less clear now."

Sherie Schwemmer is director of the World Policy Institute in New York. This year, like last year, he was asked to help draft the foreign policy section of President Clinton's State of the Union speech. What worries him is the speed with which the interests of the U.S. and Europe are diverging. The argument over Bosnia was where this began; it has since become much sharper.

"The West as a security system is fragmenting, because the unity provided by the single Soviet threat is being replaced by separate regional threats. The U.S. feels threatened by an economic crisis by Mexico which has little resonance for Europe. The Europeans feel threatened by Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa, which is far less of an issue in the U.S." Mr. Schwemmer said.

"In the past, this kind of split between the U.S. and the European allies could be resolved, not just because of NATO and the Soviet threat, but because there was a bipartisan foreign policy elite which tended to speak with a single voice. But now we see a

fragmentation of the American foreign policy community, with separate constituencies rallying around Bosnia, or Haiti, or China, and no unifying paradigm like the cold war to bind them together."

"The most serious disjunction is that the embrace of a global free market trading system is the dominant policy of the governing class. But there is no consensus that the U.S. should assume the responsibility for ensuring the global stability required for that free trade system, nor for building the institutions it requires."

People such as Mr. Maynes and Mr. Schwemmer, with their think-tanks and foreign policy journals and White House seminars, are starting to resemble "decayed aristocrats of an ancient regime. They are trying to maintain, a traditional lifestyle as the old chateau is dismantled around them, their tapestries ripped down to become cloaks for the rebellious peasants who now control Congress."

Consider Madeleine Albright, the ambassador to the U.N. trying to stem the tide against the Republican congressmen's loathing for the U.N. and all its works. She tried quoting their own party leaders, starting with George Bush in 1992 intoning that the U.N. "is emerging as a central instrument for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and the preservation of peace."

That didn't work, so she quoted Ronald Reagan, in the same year, calling for "a

standing U.N. force — an army of conscience — equipped and prepared to carve out humanitarian sanctuaries through force if necessary."

That didn't work either. She tried a desperate appeal to logic. If this Republican bill to take America out of the U.N. peacekeeping business went through, it would mean an American that could not mount a new Desert Storm, and could not legally have fought the Korean war.

"The irony is that if we put the U.N. out of business, our costs will go up, not down, for our interests will require that we act on our own more often. The wear and tear on our military will be greater, not less," she said.

Finally, she was reduced to defiance: "This administration will not allow the huddle over a more recent contract to cause the charter of the U.N., the contract of Truman and Dulles and Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt and the generation that triumphed over the Nazis, to be ripped to shreds."

Sorry, Madeleine. That line does not bring them to their feet any more. The line that does won the Republican leader, Senator Robert Dole, a standing ovation before the Republican National Committee last week: "When we recapture the White House, no American boys are gonna be serving under the command of Field-Marshal Boutros Boutros Ghali."

attacks by clan militias. There is a growing opposition in the U.S. to the involvement of U.S. forces in U.N. operations (AFP photo)

standing U.N. force — an army of conscience — equipped and prepared to carve out humanitarian sanctuaries through force if necessary."

That didn't work either. She tried a desperate appeal to logic. If this Republican bill to take America out of the U.N. peacekeeping business went through, it would mean an American that could not mount a new Desert Storm, and could not legally have fought the Korean war.

"The irony is that if we put the U.N. out of business, our costs will go up, not down, for our interests will require that we act on our own more often. The wear and tear on our military will be greater, not less," she said.

Finally, she was reduced to defiance: "This administration will not allow the huddle over a more recent contract to cause the charter of the U.N., the contract of Truman and Dulles and Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt and the generation that triumphed over the Nazis, to be ripped to shreds."

Sorry, Madeleine. That line does not bring them to their feet any more. The line that does won the Republican leader, Senator Robert Dole, a standing ovation before the Republican National Committee last week: "When we recapture the White House, no American boys are gonna be serving under the command of Field-Marshal Boutros Boutros Ghali."

That didn't work either. She tried a desperate appeal to logic. If this Republican bill to take America out of the U.N. peacekeeping business went through, it would mean an American that could not mount a new Desert Storm, and could not legally have fought the Korean war.

"The irony is that if we put the U.N. out of business, our costs will go up, not down, for our interests will require that we act on our own more often. The wear and tear on our military will be greater, not less," she said.

Finally, she was reduced to defiance: "This administration will not allow the huddle over a more recent contract to cause the charter of the U.N., the contract of Truman and Dulles and Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor Roosevelt and the generation that triumphed over the Nazis, to be ripped to shreds."

The Guardian

King meets Abdul Meguid

(Continued from page 1)

ing such a meeting is the responsibility of Arab leaders not the Arab League," he said.

Dr. Abdul Meguid said he and Sharif Zeid discussed the question of coordinating Jordanian-Arab League efforts towards ensuring the success of a March 22 Arab League Council meeting and reviewed current developments in the Arab region.

A statement following the meeting, which was attended by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Ibrahim Izzeddine, said that the two sides reviewed the peace process, pan-Arab affairs and the Arab League's role in the coming stage.

The prime minister voiced

Jordan's full backing for the Arab League and its various agencies towards serving Arab causes and enhancing Arab solidarity.

He said that Jordan, which chairs the current Arab League Council session, would do all that is in its power to ensure the success of the league's efforts to serve Arab causes and implement all topics on the session's agenda.

Mr. Kabariti earlier met Dr. Abdul Meguid for an exchange of views on Arab affairs and the work of the Arab League.

In a statement after the meeting, Mr. Kabariti said Jordan was seeking to ensure the success of the Arab League in rebuilding bridges of confidence and restoring Arab solidarity.

Mr. Kabariti said Jordan was seeking the convening of several mini-Arab-summits or the creation of mediation committees to tour Arab countries.

Mr. Kabariti also said he discussed with Dr. Abdul Meguid the agenda of the Arab League Council's meeting, which, among other things, include the creation of an Arab court of justice.

He said discussion also covered the prospects of amending the Arab League's Charter in a manner that would ensure resolutions are taken by majority vote and not unanimously as well as the question of extending the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. He said that Jordan calls for the creation of a regional centre for cooperation and security.

March to try to revive peace talks that have been stalemated for over a year.

Al Hayat, a London-based Lebanese newspaper, reported Monday that Lebanese officials expect the fishing blockade to continue until Mr. Christopher's trip.

France on Monday condemned the Israeli naval blockade on Lebanon, saying Lebanese territorial rights had to be respected.

"This situation must not continue," said foreign ministry spokesman Richard Duque. "We have called on Israel to respect Lebanon's sovereignty over its territorial waters."

'PLO could freeze talks'

(Continued from page 1)

or some 7,000, who would be compensated.

"We want to show there is a way forward that is not very complicated and doesn't require serious sacrifices to get to the next stage," Mr. Reshef said.

"Even one settlement going would be a signal to the Palestinians... that we are moving in the direction of giving back the land."

The prime minister had reiterated his opposition to the evacuation of any settlements during the five-year period of autonomy Mr. Reshef admitted.

But the left-wing Meretz Party, junior partner in Mr. Rabin's coalition, had agreed to adopt the plan under which the Israeli army could continue to patrol main roads to remaining settlements, he said. No settlements in the Jordan Valley would be affected.

The four Meretz ministers would support the plan in cabinet, Mr. Reshef said.

Peace Now believes that in the long-term all West Bank and Gaza settlements should be removed and a Palestinian state, created alongside Israel.

In Jericho, Israel agreed Monday to return to the Palestinians more than \$11 million levied as VAT on goods imported into the self-rule areas last year, a senior official said.

The deal was struck at talks between Israeli Finance Minister Avraham Shohat and Palestinian Economic Minister Ahmad Qouria.

Palestinian delegate Samir Hulusay said Israel would return 34 million shekels (\$11.3 million) during the week on top of \$4.5 million handed back last week.

He also said Israel and donor countries would shortly start to set up a series of industrial parks on the edge of the Jewish state and the autonomous zones to help create jobs.

The meeting was one of a series of follow-up talks on the implementation of an economic accord signed in Paris last April in the framework of the 1993 declaration of principles.

Mr. Qouria said the Palestinians complained about the army's continued closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip since a Jan. 22 suicide bombing killed 21 Israelis.

Israel eased the closure last week granting 15,000 work permits to Palestinians, but tens of thousands more are out of work.

Mr. Shohat said further meetings would take place next week to develop cooperation.

Meanwhile in Gaza City, Japan Monday handed over a \$5 million cheque to the PNA for road works.

Yemen, Saudi border deal may herald new era

By Assem Abdel Mohsen Reuter

SANAA — The memorandum of understanding signed by Yemen and Saudi Arabia aimed at solving a 60-year-old border dispute may herald a new era of stability between the Arabian peninsula neighbours, diplomats said.

But both parties to the accord face challenges to make the accord stick.

As far as Yemen is concerned, diplomats say Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh must convince his people, traditionally hostile to any suggestion of Saudi Arabia, that the agreement will lead to a solution of the row.

"His trump card will be to convince the Yemenis, severely pressured by economic difficulties, that a settlement of the border dispute on the basis of the memorandum will help ease their sufferings," one diplomat said.

Since 1990, ties between the two states have been strained, mainly as a result of Yemen's vote in the United Nations against the resolution that sanctioned the 1991 Gulf war to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Ties suffered further in 1994 when Saudi Arabia appeared to side with a bid by Southern Yemenis to secede from the North. Yemen is still recovering from the aftermath of the civil war, which ended with the defeat of the secessionists last July.

But the friction goes back further.

As one diplomat put it, ties between the two countries, "were at best lukewarm most of the time since the 1934 Taif agreement which the Yemenis still regard as unfair and reflecting the weight of their military defeat before the Saudis."

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz said the basis of Sunday's memorandum was "no conqueror and no vanquished."

"There are half a million Yemenis working here, the prince told reporters after the signing. "It is not possible that we treat the Yemenis less well than we treat other Arabs."

Parts of the 11-article memorandum, signed in the prince's palace in the Muslim holy city of Mecca, appeared to require compromises by both sides.

It provides for the formation of a joint committee

within 30 days to renew demarcation signs established under the Taif agreement between Saudi Arabia and the former North Yemen.

It also said the two sides would try to establish an arbitration mechanism and continue work "leading to demarcation of the remainder of the borders."

This point appeared to be a Yemeni concession. Sanaa wanted the border between Saudi Arabia and the former North Yemen and South Yemen, which merged in 1990, to be tackled as one issue.

The two sides also promised not to allow their countries to be used as "a base and centre for aggression against each other or for the carrying out of any political, military or information activities against the other side."

This appeared to be a Saudi concession, as Sanaa has complained Riyadh was giving refuge to the Yemeni opposition.

"We said we are one country and one people. If some blemishes took place between us in the past, this is over," Prince Sultan said. But he added: "We still have a long way to go..."

Information society dreams of future

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The group of seven (G-7) most industrialised nations agreed to speed up liberalisation in the world's major telecommunications markets at its ministerial conference which ended Sunday by launching a wide-ranging blueprint for the future.

The G-7 partners agreed to collaborate on the basis of eight core principles to realise their vision of the Global Information Society via the promotion of dynamic competition and private investment within an adaptable regulatory framework giving open access to markets.

But the impending technological revolution gave rise to fears of the momentous social consequences it might bring in its wake, and conferees were keen to keep such fears under wraps as their meeting came to a close.

And there was no mistaking the presence of ulterior motives, nurtured by the captains of industry hawking at politicians' sides as they waited for the green light to snatch at their fabled, but unproven, new money-spinning global market.

As for the politicians themselves meeting in closed sessions, they strove manfully to

keep consensus on the agenda and in their blueprint's conclusions.

No wonder, for the stakes are high: Investment in this hi-tech future involves billions of dollars and many battles lie ahead between large international and consortia as they rush to place themselves at the revolution's cutting edge.

Hence the lively pleas for free competition and the opening up of everyone else's markets.

All the firms represented in Brussels were drawn to the conference by a plethora of seductive dreams: Of being able in this brave new world to consult encyclopaedia on a small screen, make "virtual" tours of famous museums or Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome from one's own sitting room, or even drive an "intelligent" car.

But the new technology will also allow the consumer to choose a film and go shopping without leaving home. As former European Commission president Jacques Delors earlier told the assembled gathering: "You have to fix a few simple objectives to reassure people."

He added a balance had to be struck between allowing free competition to aid in-

novation, and regulating to protect the young and withhold information better left in the private domain, such as intellectual property, while preserving cultural diversity.

Mr. Delors meanwhile rejected fears that the "information highway" revolution — the term still means little to the average citizen of the world, polls suggested Sunday — would destroy jobs and widen the gap between rich and poor nations.

"I have heard only optimistic words over employment prospects," Mr. Delors said.

His optimism was echoed by European Industry Commissioner Martin Bangemann, who admitted nonetheless that there would be short-term job cuts.

But "job losses will be even more severe if we do not profit from technological evolution," he warned.

The advent of the information society "will generate more jobs than it will destroy," Mr. Bangemann insisted.

The director general of Japan's National Centre for Science Information Systems, Hiroshi Inose, said the idea that computers were "job destroyers" had to be fought against.

"You have to make work

more entertaining and entertaining more instructive," he said.

But there were those whose nagging doubts would not go away.

The doubters included South African Vice-President Thabo Mbeki, a guest to the meeting, who played up the worry of less-developed nations that they were to be left trailing in the slipstream of the info-saturated first world.

He noted there were already more telephone lines in Manhattan than in the whole of sub-Saharan Africa.

But industrialists as a whole were eager to start driving down those information superhighways, convinced they held the key to a prosperous future and represented "a new chance."

perhaps the only real chance, even for less developed nations to become plugged in to the system.

French Industry Minister Josse Rossé for his part promised "everything will be done to avoid a two-speed global information society."

But Pierre Lescure, chairman of French pay-TV station Canal Plus, warned that "we will have to pay for these (less-developed) countries to gain access to the information highways."

Saudi Arabia may let foreigners buy stocks through mutual funds

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia may allow foreigners for the first time to invest in its burgeoning stock market through mutual funds although the right would be limited initially to residents in the kingdom, bankers said Monday.

The possibility has been under discussion in the market for about two months by the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA), the Saudi central banking body that regulates the market, though bankers said SAMA was not expected to decide for some time yet.

"It is more than an idea. It is likely to happen but we don't know when. It is definitely on the cards," said one senior banker in Saudi Arabia.

The authorities would like to see more liquidity in the mutual fund market," he added.

The Cyprus-based weekly newsletter Middle East Economic Survey (MEES), which was first to report the possible entry of foreigners to the Saudi market Monday, said SAMA had yet to decide if foreigners other than resi-

dents would be allowed in.

"What is being discussed is allowing resident foreigners in Saudi Arabia to purchase units in certain mutual funds which would exclude any invested in banks," the senior banker said.

The move, if it goes ahead, would be a major new step to open up the Saudi market, one of the largest in the Middle East, where the value of shares traded stood at 25 billion riyals (\$6.5 billion) in 1994.

Bankers said the value of existing mutual funds was only about \$200 million but the step would nevertheless be significant as a pointer to further liberalisation of the Saudi market.

Only Saudi nationals had so far been allowed to deal in Saudi shares but a summit of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders decided in December to allow nationals of all GCC states to buy stocks in any member state — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

The GCC decision excluded bank shares, the mar-

ket leaders accounting for a quarter of the value of shares traded in the Saudi market, and the new move to allow other foreigners appears to be following the same pattern.

"Resident foreigners would be able to invest in Saudi equities and other types of instruments but not bank shares. The funds are managed by Saudi banks," the senior banker added.

Up to four million foreigners work in Saudi Arabia and are estimated to transfer about 18 billion riyals (\$4.8 billion) out of the kingdom every year.

"If the government can persuade some of that money to stay here to be invested in mutual funds, obviously that would be to the kingdom's advantage," one banker said.

Of the other GCC states, Oman and Bahrain allow limited foreign investment in their stock markets. Kuwait allows resident expatriates to buy into local mutual funds.

The step if approved will bring more potential inves-

tors which the Saudi economy now needs," one banker said.

"It will add money to the market and will help activate the market," another banker said.

The Saudi stock market has been in general decline after hitting a peak in 1992 in the euphoria after the Gulf war which ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

The market index, set up in 1985 at 100, has halved since the peak and now hovers just above 120 after falling steadily in recent months largely due to concern over the economy as limited oil revenues translate into restrictions on government spending.

Last week the index fell by its lowest level since May 1991. SAMA figures showed the index fell to 121.99 points on Feb. 19 from 122.46 points the previous week.

But this belies extraordinary activity that saw the value of shares traded last year by 43 per cent from 17.3 billion riyals (\$4.6 billion) in 1993.

Copyright pact to open China's media market

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Sunday hailed an agreement with Beijing that averted a trade war over copyright protection, saying the accord will help open China's huge untapped market to U.S. exporters.

"This is a strong agreement for American companies and American workers," Mr. Clinton said in a written statement shortly after the agreement was signed by U.S. and Chinese trade negotiators in Beijing.

"China will undertake immediate steps to crack down on piracy, enforce intellectual property rights and provide more open access for U.S. exporters to the burgeoning China market," Mr. Clinton added.

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor dropped an action that would have imposed punitive 100 per cent tariffs on about \$1.08 billion of Chinese imports. They would have been the largest trade sanctions in U.S. history and China was prepared to impose similar punitive duties on a variety of imports from the United States.

The agreement, signed just a few hours after the sanctions were to go into effect, allows U.S. music, film and computer software companies to create joint ventures with Chinese firms to produce and distribute legitimate copies of their products and to share in the profits, the U.S. trade representative's office said.

At a news conference, Mr. Kantor, flanked by representatives of music, software and film industries, said he could not put a dollar amount on the impact the agreement will have on those businesses.

"It's fair to say it will have an enormous impact," Mr. Kantor said. U.S. firms said they have lost close to \$1 billion due to pirated goods in China.

The agreement opens up China's tightly controlled market to U.S. exporters, U.S. negotiators had argued that piracy was rampant in China because of tight controls on legitimate products.

The agreement eliminates quotas, import licence requirements and other import restrictions on films, music and published products, the trade representative's office said.

China also agreed to take steps to more strictly enforce its laws protecting copyrights, patents and trademarks and to open its courts to ensure that U.S. copyright holders have success to them. Washington had complained about China's lack of enforcement of its own copyright protection laws.

The United States had demanded that China take action against some 29 factories known to be producing about 75 million copies of pirated compact discs a year. At Sunday's news conference, Mr. Kantor noted that Chinese authorities overnight raided the most notorious of the pirating factories.

Report: \$15b a year needed to alleviate poverty in South Asia

NEW DELHI (AFP) — South Asia, which accounts for more than half of the world's poorest people, needs an additional \$15 billion a year over the next decade to reduce poverty to five per cent of the population, according to a report.

"India has more people below the poverty line than Africa has people," said Hans-C. Von Sponeck, the United Nations resident coordinator in India.

"By the Indian definition, 300 million-plus people are living below the poverty line."

"The largest number of victims in this group are women," he said, releasing the conclusions of U.N.-

sponsored discussions here among Indian decision-makers ahead of the March 6-12 U.N. World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen.

Politicians, bureaucrats, non-governmental organisations, industrialists, journalists, trade unionists, U.N. representatives and academics took part in the talks and came up with what was described as a "Summit-related action plan."

Professor S.R. Hashim, a principal adviser to India's Planning Commission, said there was an acute "resource gap" among the seven members of the South Asian Association for Regional Coop-

eration (SAARC). He estimated that the SAARC countries would require an additional \$15 billion a year over the next 10 years to bring down poverty to five per cent of the population.

"For the low- and middle-income countries as a whole, the gap was \$235 billion," he added.

SAARC, which groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, accounts for around half of the 1.3 billion people surviving on less than \$370 a year, the World Bank definition of the poverty line.

Mr. Hashim said the \$15

billion needed by SAARC nations was in addition to funds already being spent on poverty alleviation and assumed a one per cent reduction in military expenditure and a three per cent rise in the savings rate.

Participants in the discussions agreed that a "major task" in alleviating poverty would be to "tap resources at the national level" and come up with "innovative sources of funding."

Among the recommendations were reducing military expenditure, raising the savings rate, improving tax collection, diversification of exports and greater efficiency in public spending.

German deficits to shrink on strong growth in east

BONN (R) — Resurgent economic growth in eastern Germany will help reduce Bonn's fiscal deficit over the next few years but restoring the virtually balanced Budget seen before unification in 1990 will be difficult, economists say.

"Among the major industrial nations, Germany alone can say its fiscal deficit stems from one cause, and that is transfers to the east," said Holger Schmieding, senior economist at Merrill Lynch Bank in Frankfurt.

Transfers totalled about 160 billion marks (\$109 billion) last year, private sector economists estimate.

This was roughly comparable to an estimated 156 billion mark (\$106 billion) public sector shortfall, which

comprises all levels of German government, social security and servicing debts for the Treasuries privatisation agency.

In 1994 the federal deficit alone was 50 billion marks (\$33.9 billion), 19.1 billion (\$13 billion) less than forecast as an unexpectedly early resumption of growth boosted revenue.

"The deficit reduction in 1994 was basically a gift to the government from the cyclical recovery," said Holger Schmieding at UBS. "Further progress on the structural deficit will be hard."

The government is forecasting a 1995 federal deficit of 58.6 billion marks (\$39.8 billion) but hopes the final figure will be much lower. It set a target last year of

reducing the federal shortfall gradually to 27 billion marks (\$18.3 billion) in 1998.

Strong growth of around eight per cent a year in east Germany will gradually reduce the need for transfers in coming years.

"Transfers will certainly decline on a net basis, as growth boosts government tax revenue from the east," said Gerhard Grebe, chief economist at Bank Julius Baer.

However, economists at Salomon Brothers said in a recent report that continued pressure by unions in the east to raise pay to Western levels, despite the region's lower productivity, could slow the decline in transfers.

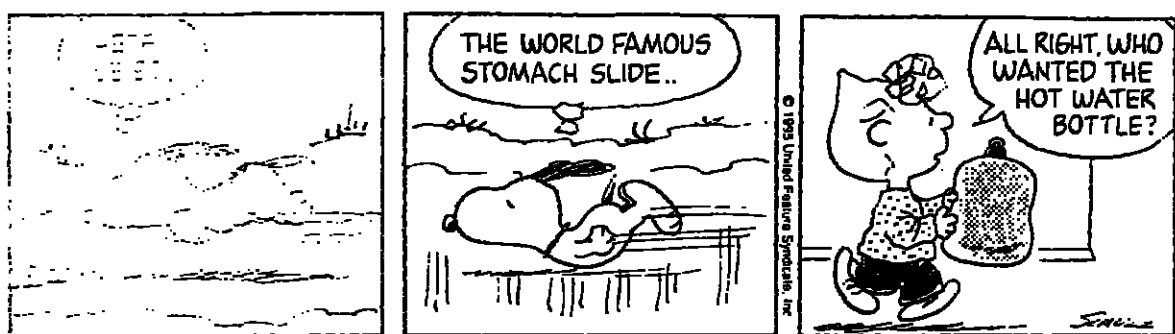
Mr. Schmieding estimates that the total public sector

deficit dropped to around 4.7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1994 from 6.1 per cent the year before. It should drop below three per cent by 1997 and to two per cent by 2000 if the government meets its target of limiting spending increases to the inflation rate plus one per cent.

Guenther Thumann of Salomon Brothers said the reintroduction of a 7.5 per cent solidarity surcharge on income and corporation tax last month should help trim the deficit this year.

The favourable trend should then continue, except for 1996, when costly measures to raise the tax threshold for the poor and improve the position of families could inflate the deficit.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



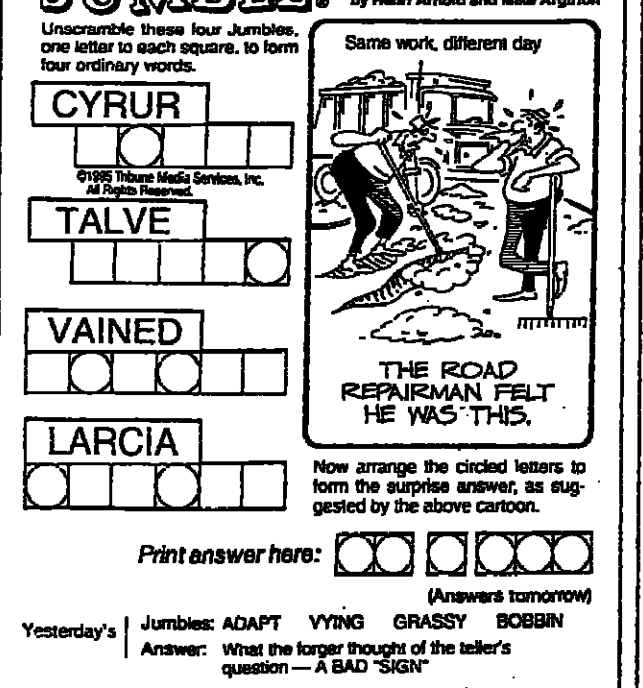
Mutt'n'Jeff



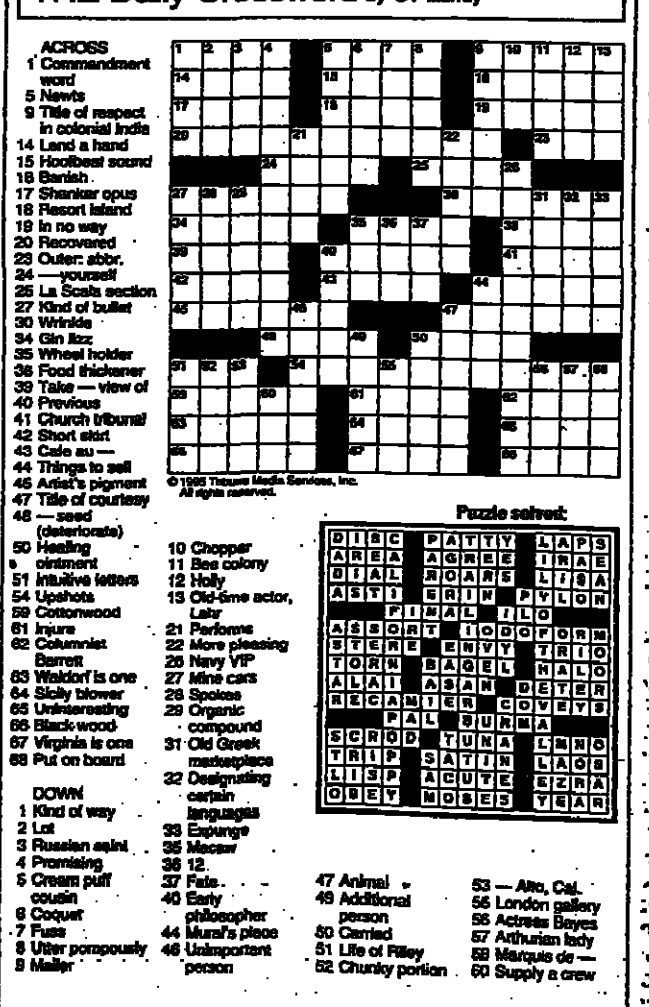
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



THE Daily Crossword by C.F. Murray



Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

Ministry preparing JD 133m worth of tenders

THE MINISTRY of Public Works and Housing intends to implement major projects in the Jordan Valley (Al Ghor) estimated at JD 133 million. The projects include a JD 75 million, 120-kilometre road between North Shouneh and South Shouneh, a JD 20 million, 23-kilometre road between Kufur Houd and Prince Mohammad Bridge, a JD 18 million, 20-kilometre road between Irbid-North Shouneh-Jordan Valley Bridge, a JD 10 million, 10-kilometre road between South Shouneh and King Hussein Bridge and widening a 10-kilometre road between Al Kafra and King Abdulhah road to become a four-lane road at a cost of JD 10 million. Work is underway in preparing the tender documents for these projects so as to start upon receiving the funds to be given as grants or loans within the framework of peace projects in the region (Al Ra'i).

THE MINISTRY of Water and Irrigation issued warnings to 51 dairy, chemical, metal and oil factories in Amman, Russeifah and Mafraq for violating the terms and specifications fixed by the ministry with regard to waste water drainage. The factories were told to take the necessary steps to dispose of the industrial waste water according to specifications or to be subject to administrative disciplinary measures (Al Ra'i).

IT IS expected that Royal Jordanian will be transformed into a public shareholding company whose shares are totally owned by the government before the end of this year. Royal Jordanian (RJ) Director-General Nader Al Dhababi said the change represents the first stage of the privatisation process. He pointed out that RJ would operate more efficiently on commercial basis during the two years following its transformation into a public entity. Mr. Dhababi noted that RJ would also be able to show higher profits to lure potential investors.

The RJ chief revealed that a special committee has finished its studies and its recommendations will be forwarded to the government in the near future. He added that discussions are continuing with the government on how to remedy previous years losses, raise the current capital and reschedule debts (Al Ra'i).

JORDAN will present 65 projects, requiring some \$6 billion of investment, to the international economic conference to be held in Amman in October. According to sources close to the committee preparing for the conference, the projects were grouped in three batches. The first batch comprises 43 government, infrastructure projects valued at \$2.5 billion. The second batch comprises 13 investment projects, valued at \$1.6 billion, and which can be funded from both the private and public sectors. The others are semi-governmental investment projects which the government has been pushing for through reconsideration of most of the laws pertaining to investment; these are only nine, estimated to cost \$1.9 billion (Al Aswaq).

The income tax office in Zarqa collected JD 2,558,995 in 1994, a 31 per cent increase over the amount collected in 1993. The number of taxpayers at the governorate at the end of 1994 stood at 39,845, of which 19,171 were individuals, 1,423 ordinary companies, 44 shareholding companies and 9,207 employees. It is expected that the Zarqa income tax office would add 3,000 new taxpayers to its list this year and would increase its revenue by about 12 per cent in 1995 (Al Ra'i).

Derivatives: The nasty nightmare of the '90s

LONDON (R) — Once bank bosses had bad dreams about pouring money down black holes in South America or into property that nobody wanted. Now their worst nightmares are about those mysterious products, derivatives.

The "D" word is guaranteed to scare politicians and regulators as well as bank managers.

Yet the people most closely involved with them insist these are no dark shadows, useful for scaring the children, but ammunition in the war against the great demon — risk.

Nor are they so complex you need a degree in astrophysics to understand them. They are essentially simple products that anyone who knows about gambling can fathom in a moment.

So what are they? Well, at their simplest, they allow financial whiz-kids like Nick Leeson of Barings to bet where prices are going to be some time in the future.

But as Barings discovered after Singapore-based Leeson ran up at least \$800 million of losses, bringing the blue-blooded bank to its knees, those whiz-kids can sometimes lose their shirts like any gambler on the Mississippi to Monte Carlo. Say, for example, you think the price of gold is going up. You buy a simple derivative called a "future," which makes money when the price goes up. But you lose the cost of that future if you're wrong and the price goes down.

More risky is another popular derivative, called an "option," which gives you

the right — but no obligation — to buy or sell at a particular price at some specified time in the weeks or months ahead.

These futures and options are very useful for people like farmers who can use them to lock in fixed prices for their crops even before the first green shoots have appeared. Miners can ensure they know what their copper or tin will be worth. And money managers can sleep easy, knowing their clients are insulated from sudden movements in interest rates.

The trouble is that for every farmer, miner or money manager with a genuine need for derivatives, there has to be a speculator willing to take on the risk.

If the farmer buys an option, there has to be someone to sell it to him. If the pen-

sion fund manager wants to rid herself of the risk that interest rates might rise, someone else has to take on the risk.

And that risk can be unlimited. If you're a trader gambling on the price of coffee going down and there's a frost in Brazil, the coffee price can go up and up and up, leaving you with unlimited losses.

What's more, critics say, it is all too easy to pull the wool over the eyes of senior bank managers and financial controllers with only a shaky grasp of the subject.

Options experts have a Greek alphabet soup of terms they use. They talk of Delta and Gamma and Theta and Vega. All are useful trading tools but they could hardly have been better designed to

confuse those outside the charmed inner circle of derivatives experts.

So should derivatives be better regulated? Should new laws be passed? Almost everyone inside the industry says no.

They argue that passing new laws is the wrong way to go about solving the problem and that the right way is self-regulation. Making sure the banks themselves control their traders, manage their risk and, above all, always know what is happening.

The buzz word is "education," ensuring that bank managers understand traders' actions, know enough to spot any rogues, and allow their bosses to sleep peacefully under their duvets, well protected from demons and dragons.

Barings collapse shakes markets, hunt on for buyers

LONDON (R) — Britain's central bank governor, called for calm Monday after the nation's oldest investment bank Barings collapsed under the weight of losses by a single maverick trader, sending shockwaves through world markets.

As administrators moved in to unravel the complex deals that allowed a 228-year-old manager in Singapore to lose more than the entire bank was worth, the British pound slumped to record lows against the German mark and shares tumbled in Asia and London.

Barings, a revered 233-year-old investment bank whose clients include Britain's Queen Elizabeth, went under Sunday with losses estimated at that time of about \$800 million.

Falls on the Tokyo stock market — where the trader triggered the crisis by gambling on future prices of Japanese equities — added another \$280 million to the red ink by the time Barings-shocked staff reached their offices Monday.

Bank of England Governor Eddie George said it was impossible to quantify the eventual losses at Barings because of the nature of the so-called derivatives market where investments were made.

"The problem was that the loss was open-ended. You couldn't fix an amount... we couldn't recommend to the government that they should sign a blank cheque to support Barings in its unique situation," Mr. George told BBC Radio Monday.

Derivatives — futures, options and swaps — are contracts linked to values of commodities, shares or bonds. They were designed as hedges against price fluctuations. Profit on speculative trade in them can be huge but so can losses.

Mr. George sought to calm the turmoil, saying the crisis was specific to Barings whose employee had concealed his activities from managers and local regulators. "I think the rational response, which may take a little while to come through, will be that this was a Barings-specific event and therefore the implications for the market as a whole or for other institutions are perhaps not as serious as they look at first sight," he said.

More than \$6 billion (\$9.5 billion) were wiped off the value of stocks in London as the index of 100 leading shares slumped 50 points on opening. The index recovered slightly to stand 23.7 points down at 3,014 at midday.

The slightly steadier tone to markets suggested that Mr. George's attempt to "ring-fence" the Barings debacle and prevent contagion may have been working. But hard questions were being asked about the ability of British banks to compete worldwide.

"This underlines the fact that U.K. merchant banks are under-capitalised and can't take on the world... what this does throw up is a need for mergers in the sector," one London banking analyst said.

The pound was at 2.3055 marks in London at midday, just above a new low in early European trading of 2.2950 marks.

British Finance Minister Kenneth Clarke was due to address parliament later Monday as calls grew for tougher regulations of financial institutions.

"People will ask whether the old-fashioned procedures in Britain conducted by an old-boy network are really relevant for an international global market... we have got to do far more," said opposition Labour finance spokesman Gordon Brown.

Administrators — a team of top accountants — were trying to establish if any of Barings' various operations could find buyers. One analyst said several European banks seeking to reinforce their investment banking presence could be interested.

The losses to individual investors and customers of Barings are still being calculated. But Queen Elizabeth's investment portfolio, reputed to stand at about \$60 million (\$95 million), was thought to be protected, along with other assets, under the Barings asset management arm.

Staff at Barings were subdued as they arrived for work in London, unsure whether they still had a job.

Nick Leeson, the London-born trader said to have masterminded the derivatives dealing, was nowhere to be found. One report had him in Thailand, another that he was in a hospital in Malaysia, and yet another that he had turned himself in to the Singapore authorities.

Financial Jordan Times

In co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 27/2/95	Tokyo Close 27/2/95
Sterling Pound	1.5885	1.5801*
Deutsche Mark	1.4610	1.4575*
Swiss Franc	1.2455	1.2370**
French Franc	5.1465	5.1380**
Japanese Yen	96.96	96.96
European Currency Unit	1.2750	1.2755**

USD Per STG, European Currency Unit 1996-1997

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.81	5.93	6.12	6.50
Sterling Pound	6.31	6.50	6.81	7.50
Deutsche Mark	4.75	4.81	5.00	5.50
Swiss Franc	3.37	3.50	3.75	4.18
French Franc	5.75	6.00	6.55	6.75
Japanese Yen	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.12
European Currency Unit	6.06	6.19	6.50	7.06

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

Source: 27/2/1995

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	27/02/1995
ARAB BANK PIG	300	56890	190.000	189.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	4100	12312	4.480	4.500
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK / NEW	2100	9072	4.320	4.320
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	17000	25510	1.520	1.520
THE BOUSING BANK	750	4538	6.060	6.050
JORDAN TOWERS BANK	1700	5100	3.000	3.000
JORDAN GULF BANK	6800	9366	1.380	1.380
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	9707	22218	3.900	3.910
JORDAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE BANK	21469	21469	4.080	4.100
JORDAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	17000	21624	1.280	1.270
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	150	213	1.420	1.420
BANKS SECTOR	60869	194464	INDEX NUMBER: 151.60	CHANGE: -0.17%
DELTA INSURANCE	250	390	1.490	1.560
INSURANCE SECTOR	387	633	INDEX NUMBER: 137.16	CHANGE: -0.00%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	7750	12183	1.560	1.570
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	1100	1644	1.490	1.500
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	150	735	4.900	4.900
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	2280	7645	3.400	3.390
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	1450	3408	2.350	2.350
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALMA'I	100	1160	12.000	11.600
SERVICES SECTOR	12800	26774	INDEX NUMBER: 131.64	CHANGE: -0.43%
JORDAN TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	300	10308	34.000	34.300
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	29284	88787	3.060	3.010
JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES	100	275	2.750	2.750
THE ARAB FOSPHATE / NEW	350	1750	5.000	5.000
JORDAN PETROLEUM VENTURE	10017	10017	9.950	9.950
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1200	5524	4.650	4.590
JORDAN CERAMIC INDUSTRIES	200	1200	6.040	6.000
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	500	1338	2.680	2.670
SPINNING & WEAVING	750	1350	1.800	1.800
RAPIA INDUSTRIES	100	289	2.880	2.890
DAR AL-DAMA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	3500	7570	2.160	2.160
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9750	7443	0.770	0.760
JORDAN PETROLEUM CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	1250	4019	3.210	3.210
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & NATCO/JISCO	700	539	0.780	0.770
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	100	475	4.750	4.750
ARAB CENTER FOR PETROLEUM & CHEMICALS	100	262	2.620	2.620
KANTHER INVESTMENT	350	580	1.650	1.650
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1200	4543	3.780	3.780
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	2250	4664	2.080	2.090
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	53464	171887	INDEX NUMBER: 123.66	CHANGE: -0.60%
GRAND TOTAL	127520	397358	INDEX NUMBER: 143.77	CHANGE: -0.33%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	57303			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	73634			

JORDAN MARKET PLACE

FOR RENT
Many apartments and villas furnished and unfurnished. We also have many listings of villas, flats, and building lots.
FOR SALE
Commercial and residential.
For more details call:
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel. 810805/810809
810520
Fax: 810520

A SECURE Hotel
Turino
P.O. TEL. SECURITY HOSPITALITY GASTRONOMY
All Suites Hotel
FLAT O.T. TEL.
الجميع القفلية الفندقية
863944 - 816690

Cheers Cafe
Hamburgers & Pizzas
ELITE CAFE
Sweetfryeh
816690
At Turino

For Your Stay in Amman
Quality Furnished Flats
Crystal
One and Two Bedrooms
Reasonable Rates For Short or Long Stay
5th Circle
674563 - 674551

La Coquette
FRENCH CUISINE
ENJOY THE NEW MENU
SEAFOOD
LUNCH & DINNER
7 DAYS A WEEK
68000 / 4

Valentino's RESTAURANT
Open Daily
Jabal Amman - First circle
opposite the ITALY EMBASSY
TEL: 654295

FOR RENT
Deluxe Villas & Apartments in Amman
SANABEL REAL ESTATE
Tel. 864230
Fax. 864231

RELIABLE
RENT A RELIABLE CAR AT A RELIABLE PRICE
TEL: 6/819676 FAX: 6/819676
ABDOUL
19 FAWZI AL-MALKI ST.
P.O. BOX: 880641
AMMAN 11198-JORDAN
WE HAVE NO OTHER BRANCHES

ESSENHAW GARDENS CHINESE RESTAURANT
Typical Chinese Food
Stuffed Chinese Chicks
Open 12:30 - 3:30 & 6:00 - 10:00
Take away is available
Sit At- Arab Street
Use Unbranded Commercial Centre
Tel: 881174
Buses Tracked Always Loaded

MING-SHING Chinese Restaurant
The Best Cooking, Best Service, Best Atmosphere in Amman
Deir Ghbar - American Embassy Str. near Baytuna Housing Estate
Open from: 12 noon - 3:30 p.m.
8:30 - 11:30 p.m.
Tel: 861838

FOR YOUR Advertisement in Jordan Times
Call tel: 667171 ext. 223

EURO DOLLAR RENT A CAR
Your First Choice in Car Rental
Shmeisani
Tel: 693399

STUDIO HAIG
Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service
Develop your colour film at our shop and get:
• JUMBO photo size 30% larger
• Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm
Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays Bank. Phone: 60402
Swedish tel: 82389

Barcelona keep Cruyff's dream alive

PARIS (AFP) — Barcelona kept Johan Cruyff's dream of the Spanish title alive here on Sunday as front-runners Real Madrid and chief rivals Deportivo La Coruna both slipped up.

Real's hard-earned 1-1 draw at Athletic Bilbao allowed Barcelona to edge to within four points of the top, while Deportivo surrendered second place to Cruyff's men by slumping to a 1-0 defeat at Espanol Barcelona.

Cruyff's claim that his side could still win the title seemed at best optimistic and at worst misguided after his side's recent 3-0 defeat at Racing Santander and 4-1 cup reverse at Atletico Madrid.

But the weekend 2-1 victory at Compostela — the first coming through Cruyff's son Jordi — came on top of last week's success at Espanol to take the side to 31 points.

Real, who went behind to a 44th minute header from Athletic skipper Genaro Aduana, needed Ivan Zamorano's 19th goal 15 minutes from time to earn a point.

The Chilean nodded in a left centre to take his side to 35 points, with Barcelona on 31 and La Coruna 30.

In Italy, it was a day of wonderful strikes as Faustino Asprilla and Gianluca Vialli both shone. Their brilliance, however, changed nothing at the top as Juventus remained six points clear after their seventh away win of the season.

Colombian Asprilla, just back from injury, netted twice, in the 11th and 52nd minute — the first a brilliant volley on the turn from 30 metres after taking a pass from Gianfranco Zola — for Parma to see off fourth-placed Lazio 2-0.

But Vialli's equally impressive late winner at Sampdoria cancelled out his efforts.

Sampdoria, without the injured English midfielder David Platt, could have no excuses after wasting three gilt-edged chances through Attilio Lombardo.

Twice he surfaced on the right, dragging his first shot across the box and then hitting the left post with a carbon copy effort. He then latched onto a low cross from the left just eight yards out and managed to spoon his side-footer way over the bar.

Those escapes gave Vialli the perfect chance to produce the match's punch line with his 11th goal of the campaign. He broke down the right, pushing off one defender then sidestepping past Pietro Vierchow before blasting home inside the near post for the only goal of Sunday's game.

AS Roma won 2-0 over struggling Reggina to stay third, while another striker to shine was Gabriel Batistuta, the Argentinian netting Fiorentina's second in the 2-2 draw with Inter Milan.

It was Batistuta's 18th goal of the season and the perfect way to celebrate his new contract with his club which should keep him there until 1999.

His joy was dimmed, however, after he had two penalty appeals turned down. "If those weren't penalties, then I don't understand the game anymore," he said.

In Germany, Borussia Dortmund beat Cologne 2-1 at the weekend through Jürgen Treutshock and Stéphane Chapuisat to maintain their four-point lead over second-placed Werder Bremen.

Dortmund have now scored seven times in two matches since resuming from their two-month winter break.

Two goals from Mario Basler helped Werder Bremen notch up their second win in a row, at Bayer Leverkusen.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Rai on bench for Barcelona Cup-tie

CHATEAUXROUX, France (AFP) — Paris St. Germain coach Luis Fernandez keeps Brazilian star Rai on the substitutes' bench for Wednesday's European Champions' Cup quarter-final first leg tie in Barcelona. Liberian George Weah teams up with David Ginola in attack. Playmaker Valdo is fit but the club's third Brazilian, Ricardo, is unlikely to play again this season after tearing a thigh muscle a third time. Fernandez is a fan of Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff and as part of his course for a higher diploma in coaching he needs to spend a week with a foreign club. "I'd like to do it at Barcelona, but will they have me after we've beaten them," he said confidently.

Chinese runners turn to law

BEIJING (R) — Former members of China's world-beating "Ma family army" distance running team, including double world record holder Wang Junxia, want to become lawyers, the China sports daily said on Monday. But the track stars will not hang up their running shoes just yet, the newspaper said. "The country needs law, law is essential to reform. I want to be a lawyer," it quoted Wang, who smashed the women's 10,000 and 3,000 metres records in one extraordinary week in August 1993, as saying. The entire Liaoning women's distance running team, which replaced the group trained by controversial Ma Junren, after it broke up last month, were applying to study law at Liaoning University in Northeastern China, Wang said.

Gunnell launches drugs campaign

LONDON (R) — Sally Gunnell launched a campaign on Monday aimed at steering Britain's athletes clear of some of the drug-taking controversies which scarred the sport last year. Gunnell, the British women's team captain, has written to nearly 500 international athletes urging them to ensure that over-the-counter products they take do not contain banned substances. And she will continue her initiative by working with the British Athletic Federation to make them fully aware of the correct procedures when they are tested. Sprinter Solomon Wariso and javelin thrower Colin Mackenzie were both banned for three months in 1994 after taking what they thought were harmless products.

Chelsea fans ferried back

OSTENDE, Belgium (AFP) — About 30 Chelsea fans, on their way to Tuesday's European Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final with Bruges, were put on the ferry back to England on Monday after a night of trouble. Police said 11 drunken fans had smashed up a cafe and up to 20 on the ferry from Ransgate were found not to have tickets for the high-risk match. Security forces were worried that 800 forged tickets might have been sold in England and that other fans had obtained tickets for parts of the ground allocated for Belgian supporters. Fans were meant to be kept apart as one of a series of measures aimed at preventing trouble.

Schneider wins 54th World Cup race

MARIBOR, Slovenia (R) — Olympic champion Vreni Schneider stormed to the 54th victory of her World Cup career when she won her sixth Maribor slalom Monday. Schneider, lying second after the first leg on Sunday, swept aside the opposition on Monday to win by more than a second in a combined two-leg time of one minute 45.26 seconds. The 30-year-old Swiss racer gained the first of her six Maribor slalom wins in 1989 and has now won here four years in succession. Heavy rain on Sunday followed by snow forced the organisers to postpone the second leg till Monday. Slovenia's Katja Koren, who was born in Maribor, finished second in an aggregate 1:46.65, ahead of Norway's Trude Gimle, who gained a place on the podium for the first time by finishing third in 1:46.88.

QPR draw 1-1 against Forest

LONDON (R) — Nottingham Forest striker Stan Collymore, cleared of two assault charges in court last week, was guilty of a dreadful miss that allowed relegation-threatened Queens Park Rangers to draw 1-1 at home on Sunday. Simon Barker nodded in the equaliser for Rangers in the 87th minute to take his team one precious point further away from the relegation trap-door of the English Premier League. Forest had appeared to be heading for their first away win in four games after Steve Stone's first goal in five months in the 58th minute. But in the 70th minute Collymore fired over the bar after being presented with a chance no more than three yards (metres) out.

Agreement reached over Cape Town bid for 2004 Games

CAPE TOWN (AP) — Feuding Olympic officials, city councilors and private investors have agreed on who should control Cape Town's bid to host the 2004 Games.

At a meeting Sunday night described as stormy, the groups decided the Cape Town City Council would decide whether it or another group it designates should sign the bid contract with the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA).

While few specifics were divulged after the meeting, it appeared to allow for super-market magnate Raymond Ackerman — head of a private bid committee that so far has spearheaded the Cape Town effort — to play a prominent role.

Last week, Ackerman accused NOCSA head Sam Ramsamy of renegeing on a verbal assurance to sign the

bid contract with Ackerman's group, which promised to raise 60 million rand (\$17.1 million). Ackerman said Ramsamy was offering to sign the bid contract with the Cape Town City Council if it agreed to pay 190 million rand (\$53.4 million).

At Sunday's meeting, attended by Ackerman, NOCSA officials and city council members, the participants agreed the city council would sign the bid contract or designate another group to

do so, as stipulated by the Olympic charter.

The only comment came from sports minister Steve Tshwete, who chaired the meeting.

"It was very difficult," Tshwete said. "The sparks were flying, but eventually sanity prevailed and everyone understood the responsibility not only for tens of thousands of Capetonians, but to the country and Africans."

DUTY UNPAID CAR FOR SALE 1991 TOYOTA COROLLA

Very good condition, clean and reliable, white, manual gearbox, 1.3 L engine, A/C, Saudi plates. Offers to Philip Tel/fax/answerphone: 682212

led to the king and West ducked. Declarer continued with a spade and not unreasonably, finessed the ten. East raked in the jack, cashed the king of clubs and persisted with the ace, drew trumps with the ten and queens and was at the crossroads.

To get home, it was obvious to one and all that declarer would have to develop spades. A low spade was

played and West ducked. Declarer continued with a spade and not unreasonably, finessed the ten. East raked in the jack, cashed the king of clubs and persisted with the ace, drew trumps with the ten and queens and was at the crossroads.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

"Why do most column heads feature rubber bridge instead of duplicate?" asks a reader. Since rubber bridge players are not as concerned with unessential tricks, they are more likely to take chances to make or break a contract, which is good material for a column. This hand is typical.

As a passed hand, South had just enough to respond two hearts to

the bidding.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TALAL HUSSEIN
1994 Jordan Media Services, Inc.

GIVE ONE, GET TWO

Both vulnerable. South deals.
NORTH
♠ Q 10 8 3 2
♥ Q 10 2
♦ A
♣ A 8 4
WEST
♠ A 8 4
♥ J 7 6
♦ K 7 4 3
♣ 5 2
EAST
♠ J 6 5
♥ 5 3
♦ K 8 6 5
♣ K Q 10 9
SOUTH
♠ K 7
♥ A J 9 8 4
♦ J 10 2
♣ J 7 5

South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 3 ♥ Pass
Pass Pass
Opening lead: Five of ♠

North's one-spade opening bid. Despite a minimum opening, North's two heart honors and distribution merited a raise, but South did not have enough to bid on.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

To get home, it was obvious to one and all that declarer would have to develop spades. A low spade was

played and West ducked. Declarer continued with a spade and not unreasonably, finessed the ten. East raked in the jack, cashed the king of clubs and persisted with the ace, drew trumps with the ten and queens and was at the crossroads.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a doubleton club, won by East with the queen after declarer played low from the table. East returned a trump, ducked by declarer and taken by West with the king. Back came a club and South rose with dummy's ace.

West led the top of a

NEWS IN BRIEF

Head of French interests section due in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The head of France's new interests section in Iraq is due here Tuesday four years after Paris broke off diplomatic ties with Baghdad, sources in the Romanian embassy said. Jean-Francois Nodinet, 62, is to head the section based at the Romanian embassy in Baghdad which will open after the 'Eid Al Fitr festival. Paris, which has had no ties with Baghdad since the Gulf war to liberate Kuwait in February 1991, announced Jan. 6 it would open an interests section. France has joined a rush by other European and Middle East countries to secure a foothold in the lucrative Iraqi market once U.N. oil and trade sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 are lifted. France and Russia have led growing calls within the U.N. Security Council for the sanctions to be lifted, or at least eased, but have come up against stiff U.S. and British opposition. Mr. Nodinet was ambassador to Yemen from 1989 to 1992 and adviser at the Baghdad embassy from 1977 to 1980.

Israel to deploy motorcycle police

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli police are setting up a special motorcycle squad to be deployed in Jerusalem, the authorities said Monday. Some 30 hand-picked men will be equipped with bullet-proof vests, helmets, pistols and automatic weapons. They will ride Kawasaki 500CC bikes. However, they have yet to take delivery of the new motorcycles and have begun training on scooters.

Ramos to visit UAE for economic talks

ABU DHABI (AFP) — President Fidel Ramos will visit the United Arab Emirates on Sunday to discuss economic cooperation in the first visit here by a Philippines head of state, an embassy spokesman said. Mr. Ramos will hold talks with UAE President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan on boosting political, trade and economic links, the spokesman told AFP. He will also meet with members of the Philippine community to explain his country's economic reforms and urge them to invest at home. More than 80,000 Filipinos live in the UAE, remitting home between \$50 million and \$100 million a year, according to bankers. Philippine exports to the UAE, mostly clothes and manufactured products, have surged by more than 10 times over the past decade to reach around \$149 million in 1993, embassy figures show. The UAE's exports to the Philippines, mainly oil, topped \$250 million.

Velayati to visit EU member Greece

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati is to begin a tour of Greece, Austria and Slovakia next week in a bid to dispel misconceptions about Iran, a newspaper said here Monday. The visits are aimed at raising "awareness about Iranian ideology and culture," the English-language Iran News said, quoting Foreign Ministry sources. "The Foreign Ministry plans to rectify these misconceptions by establishing broader relations with European Union member states and present them with a realistic vision of the Islamic republic," it added. Mr. Velayati's official visit to Greece and Austria will be only the second by an Iranian foreign minister to European Union members since the EU froze high-level exchanges with Iran in December 1992.

Bomber critically injured in blast in Ankara

ANKARA (AFP) — A man who was planting a bomb at the offices of a pro-Ataturk organisation was critically injured when the device went off prematurely, witnesses said here Monday. The Anatolia news agency earlier reported that the man was killed. Witnesses said the man lost both hands and was taken to hospital after he tried to plant a bomb in toilets on the second floor of the offices of an association upholding the secular ideas of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founding father of the Turkish state. They added that the bomb could not have been very powerful because no-one else was injured and it caused no serious damage. The organisation's vice president, Tevfik Kizinyaka, told AFP that the association had not received any threats, but that its address had recently been published by the weekly Taraf, the mouthpiece of the IBDA-C (Islamic Front for the Combatants of the Greater Orient), a Muslim fundamentalist group.

Iraqi court sentences 2 criminals to death

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi court has sentenced two criminals to be hanged for murder and theft, the government newspaper Al Jumhuriya said on Monday. "A specialised court of the Ministry of Interior has ruled to hang criminals Rida Jaber and Tahsin Hussein," it reported. The two burgled a house and murdered the son and daughter of its owner, but the paper did not say if the ruling had yet been carried out. Crime, particularly theft, is rampant in Iraq, under punitive U.N. trade sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Saudis balk at more Indonesian pilgrims

JAKARTA (AP) — Fearing another stampede like those that killed hundreds of pilgrims in years past, Saudi Arabia is likely to turn down Indonesia's request for a larger quota to visit Mecca in 1995, an official said Monday. About 250 people died last year as worshippers surged during a pebble-throwing ritual in the annual pilgrimage to Islam's holiest shrine. In 1990, around 1,430 people, including some 650 Indonesians, died in a pedestrian tunnel that leads from Mecca to Mina. Religious Affairs Minister Tarmizi Taher said there was little hope that Saudi Arabia would allow Indonesia to exceed the quota for those intending to make the pilgrimage. "The Saudi government is concerned with the safety of pilgrims after the incidents, which were indirectly caused by excessive numbers," Mr. Taher said after a meeting with President Suharto.

Finnish minister looks for business in Israel, Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Finland's Deputy Prime Minister and Trade Minister Pertti Salolainen began Monday a three-day visit to Israel and Gaza Strip to boost economic ties, officials said. He brought a delegation of businessmen from the energy, high technology and telecommunications sectors for a series of meetings with Israeli officials and companies. He was to go to the autonomous Gaza Strip on Tuesday.

UAE frees ship held on suspicion

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates has released a cargo ship held for nearly a month on suspicion of smuggling Iraq dates, India's UAE ambassador said on Monday. "The UAE authorities informed me that the cargo and the ship were released," M.P.M. Menon told Reuters. He declined to comment on whether this meant the authorities had cleared the ship of violating U.N. trade sanctions on Iraq. The Gulf Splendor's 16-man crew are Indians. The captain's wife was also on board. The ship was boarded by U.S. Navy personnel in the Gulf Jan. 18 on suspicion that its cargo of 2,100 tonnes of dates came from Iraq. The captain said the cargo had been loaded in Iran. The ship was diverted to the small UAE port of Umm Al Quwain early in February to be investigated by UAE authorities. "The ship is Panamanian-flagged and owned in the UAE but we were worried about the (Indian) crew getting stuck," Mr. Menon said. He added that the ship's cargo might be sold in the UAE, not in India as originally planned.

80 killed in carbomb in Zakho — PUK

NICOSIA (AFP) — A massive carbomb killed at least 80 people and wounded more than 100 others in the town of Zakho in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq on Monday, officials said.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) official Kosrat Rassoul, contacted by AFP in the main town of Erbil by telephone from Nicosia, blamed the attack on "Baghdad intelligence services."

The bomb went off early Monday in the town in Dohuk province bordering Turkey, Mr. Rassoul said.

He gave the toll as at least 80 dead and more than 100 wounded in an attack he condemned as an "odious crime." Zakho is under the control of the PUK's rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

Masoud Barzani's KDP and the PUK led by Jalal Talabani have been locked in a bitter power struggle for several months in which Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has offered to mediate.

A U.N. spokesman in Geneva confirmed that a huge bomb had gone off in Zakho killing about 80 people, but said details were sketchy as U.N. personnel were based in Dohuk.

And the opposition alliance the Iraqi National Congress (INC) in London also said a carbomb had exploded in the town causing at least 200 casualties, and destroying 20 cars and 50 shops.

The area has been controlled by the Kurds in defiance of Baghdad since the end of the January-February 1991 Gulf war. Allied warplanes patrol an air exclusion zone imposed above the 36th parallel to protect the Kurds from Iraqi forces.

A carbomb in the central market of the northern Iraqi city of Erbil killed five people and injured 82, many of them children, on Jan. 22, 1993.

Kurdish security officials at the time said Kurdish leaders had received information indicating that the Baghdad government was planning to unleash a "terrorist campaign against Kurdistan," in northern Iraq.

There have been regular carbomb attacks in the region since the Kurds took control. One targeted the official convoy of Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of French President Francois Mitterrand, during a visit to Kurdistan in July 1992. Five people were killed in that blast.

Meanwhile, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported in Tehran on Monday that at least 100 people had been killed in clashes between rival Kurdish factions in the region in the past three days.

The agency said a "large number" of people had been injured in an attack Friday by the KDP and a Hizbollah party.

Intense clashes were underway Monday in the regions of Shaghalay, Palisan and Ranieh, IRNA said adding that the KDP and the pro-Iranian Hizbollah were preparing to launch a new offensive on PUK strongholds.

But the reports were denied by Mr. Rassoul.

The PUK controls the areas of Erbil and Sulaymaniyah while the KDP runs a strip along the frontier with Iran and the region of Dohuk.

U.S. Marines go ashore in Mogadishu to help retreat

MOGADISHU (AP) — American Marines came ashore in Mogadishu for the second time in two years Monday, returning to protect the last retreating U.N. peacekeepers.

About 150 Marines landed on a beach at the city's seaside airport by helicopter and helical air cushion vessels to set up command headquarters and mark landing routes for about 2,000 others to follow.

U.S. commanders would not say when the rest of the troops would come ashore, but their arrival was clearly imminent.

In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Scott Campbell

Muasher sworn in

JORDAN'S Ambassador-designate to Israel Marwan Al Muasher was Monday sworn in before His Majesty King Hussein at a special ceremony held at the Royal Court.

The ceremony was attended by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasbi and Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti. Dr. Muasher served as head of the Jordan Information Bureau (JIB) in Washington and later as the spokesman for Jordan's peace negotiations with Israel.

Dr. Muasher is expected to leave for Tel Aviv to assume office next month. Israel has not yet named its ambassador to Jordan.



Jordan's Ambassador-designate to Israel Marwan Muasher is sworn in on Monday in front of His Majesty King Hussein (Petra photo)

Russians hunt for Chechens

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Russian troops have sealed off the Chechen capital of Grozny and are now ready to hunt down rebel fighters trapped in the city, the Russian authorities said here Monday, quoted by the news agency Interfax.

Last week the Russian forces succeeded in gaining control of the last roads out of the city still used by the rebels. The government press service said a second, outer cordon had now been sealed around Grozny.

The government communiqué said that the rebels could no longer enter or leave Grozny, and that government troops would now comb the city and "destroy militants who failed to flee the Chechen capital."

Russian forces won control of most of Grozny in mid-February, forcing a withdrawal of the main body of Chechen troops defending the city. But rebel hit-and-run squads have remained, operating mainly at night.

The Chechens' chief military commander, Aslan Maskhadov, said his separatist forces, who have been fighting Russian troops since Dec. 11, were now "much stronger than when we started — in both spirit and organisation."

"Our tactic is to fight very close to the city. The Russians use airplanes and artillery and try to fight at long distance. We try to get close so they can't use those weapons," Mr. Maskhadov told reporters.

Russian big guns opened up on Chechen positions south of Grozny shortly after dawn on Monday following an overnight lull. On Sunday they bombarded separatist forces in the town of Argun just to the east of the capital.

Russian troops also continued an intense artillery and rocket attack Monday on the village of Stary Atagi, 20 kilometres southeast of Grozny.

Rebel fighters said the latest attack, which started on the weekend, was apparently aimed at capturing a strategic hill — Mount Shakh — which would give the Russians control of large areas of Chechnya.

They said the Russians aimed to move heavy artillery onto the hill, which would allow them to seal off the Shatoy valley in mountainous southern Chechnya which the rebels plan to use as a base for a protracted guerrilla war.

Capture of the hill would also give the Russians control of a main east-west route linking rebel-held areas such as Shali, Argun and Gudermes east of Grozny.

The government communiqué said the Chechen rebels were moving in significant numbers towards Argun and Gudermes, and also towards residential areas near Chechnya's eastern border with the Russian republic of Dagestan.

A rail bridge across the Chechnya-Dagestan border was blown up overnight Sunday, and a nearby road bridge badly damaged.

Interfax quoted the Dagestan minister for ethnic affairs, Magomed Gusayev, as saying that the two blasts were "a provocation aimed at involving Dagestan in the conflict in Chechnya."

There is a substantial Chechen minority living in Dagestan, a mainly Muslim republic which has not overtly taken sides in the Chechnya conflict.

Russian officials maintain that residents of communities in the border areas and in other towns such as Samashki, west of Grozny, are trying to force rebel fighters out so that they will not become targets of Russian bombardments.

The latest fighting comes amid reports of high-ranking Russian officials converging on Moscow, the Russian base for operations in Chechnya, for talks on rebuilding the war-battered breakaway republic.

Interfax said President Boris Yeltsin's special envoy for Chechnya, First Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets, arrived Monday in

Moedok, North Ossetia, to meet the commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, General Anatoly Kalikov.

A spokesman for Mr. Soskovets said he would then travel on to Grozny for a conference on the economic reconstruction of Chechnya.

Interior Minister Viktor Yerin was also expected to attend, along with senior officials from other ministries including defence and counter-intelligence.

Fresh international criticism of Russian forces came on Sunday from a group of Human Rights Watch/Helsinki researchers.

A new report released in Washington and based on a 10-day field investigation said Russian forces were committing gross abuses against the civilian population, using disproportionate force to dislodge Chechen fighters from villages.

Russian troops have been firing artillery at staging posts and routes used by Chechen fighters to infiltrate the capital.

There has also been sporadic shelling and bombing of Chechen-held towns and villages south, east and west of Grozny, causing significant civilian casualties. Seven civilians were killed and 15 others wounded in Shalal, south of Grozny, on Saturday when Russian warplanes bombed the town.

German officials have confirmed that they have discussed Arad with the Iranians, but refused comment on the newspaper reports.

When asked about Arad, Mr. Bitterlich told reporters Monday after his meeting with Mr. Rabin that "we have been trying to help Israel for some time."

"It's normal that under the circumstance we (he and Rabin) discussed the case for a short moment," added Mr. Bitterlich, who heads the foreign affairs section in Mr. Kohl's office.

Mr. Rabin's office said in a statement that Mr. Bitterlich showed understanding for the suffering that was caused by "inaccurate and irresponsible reports," concerning Arad.

Mr. Rabin also discussed the Middle East peace process with Mr. Bitterlich and singled out Iran as a country threatening stability in the region by supporting militant groups, the statement said.

Israeli officials have complained privately that Germany was using alleged negotiations over the release of Arad as a shield to deflect criticism by the United States and Israel over Bonn's warning ties with Iran.

A German newspaper reported last week that Germany was mediating between Israel and Iran, and that Arad's release was imminent.

Israeli officials denied such talks and complained that leaks harmed Arad's case and caused pain to his family.

German officials have confirmed that they have discussed Arad with the Iranians, but refused comment on the newspaper reports.

When asked about Arad, Mr. Bitterlich told reporters Monday after his meeting with Mr. Rabin that "we have been trying to help Israel for some time."

"It's normal that under the circumstance we (he and Rabin) discussed the case for a short moment," added Mr. Bitterlich, who heads the foreign affairs section in Mr. Kohl's office.

Mr. Rabin's office said in a statement that Mr. Bitterlich showed understanding for the suffering that was caused by "inaccurate and irresponsible reports," concerning Arad.

Mr. Rabin also discussed the Middle East peace process with Mr. Bitterlich and singled out Iran as a country threatening stability in the region by supporting militant groups, the statement said.

Israeli officials have complained privately that Germany was using alleged negotiations over the release of Arad as a shield to deflect criticism by the United States and Israel over Bonn's warning ties with Iran.

2 militants executed in Egypt

CAIRO (Agencies) — Two militants have been hanged for killing two German tourists and two Egyptians in a gun attack on a market in a holiday resort, the Egyptian news agency reported Monday.

They were hanged Saturday in a Cairo jail after President Hosni Mubarak had rejected an appeal against the military court sentence handed down Dec. 3 for the murders of Hurgada on the Red Sea last September.

The bodies of Mohammad Atallah Omar and Rabiha Mahmoud Hussein were taken and buried during the night in Qena 640 kilometres south of Cairo, police said.

Teenage runaway flying back to London

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — A 14-year-old British boy is scheduled to fly back to London Monday night after he ran away to Malaysia using his father's passport and credit card, airline officials said.

A spokesman for Malaysian Airlines said Peter Kerry has a confirmed seat on the mid-night flight to London. A British High Commission spokesman said he could not confirm or deny that Peter Kerry is taking a midnight flight back to London on Malaysian Airlines. "We hope the Malaysian government takes a sympathetic attitude," he said. Diplomats said Malaysia would probably let Kerry go, despite the fact that he entered the country illegally. Kerry, now in the custody of the British High Commission, bluffed his way past immigration in Britain and Malaysia using his father's passport on a strange odyssey that began a week ago with a family quarrel over a spilled can of spaghetti. He was discovered Sunday night by Malaysian residents in the northern town of Kota Bharu, who took him to the home of a British citizen. Kerry, wearing a blue baseball cap, looked fit but a little green after arriving at Kuala Lumpur International Airport from Kota Bharu. He said nothing to reporters. A High Commission official, who met Kerry at the airport, said the mission was working with Malaysian officials to arrange his speedy return to Britain.

Paparazzi hawking pictures of topless Diana

LONDON (AFP) — Paparazzi Daniel Angeli is hawking photographs of a topless Princess Diana, snapped sunbathing in the French West Indies, the Daily Express reported Monday. "They will sell for a fortune if anyone has the bottle to run them," the tabloid commented, adding that they were of high quality. A French photographer working for Angeli secretly took the pictures of the Princess of Wales, 33, beside a private swimming pool on the tiny island of Saint Barthelemy, where she was staying until Sunday. Angeli took the photographs in 1992 of Princess Diana's sister-in-law the Duchess of York, shown topless and in a compromising position with her financial adviser beside a swimming pool in the French Mediterranean resort of Saint Tropez.

The couple won damages under the French privacy law when they sued the weekly Paris-Match after it published the pictures. Princess Diana also sued the Mirror Group of newspapers and gym club boss Bryce Taylor after the publication of clandestine pictures showing her working out at his gym. They settled out of court earlier this month, five days before the case was due to open. Press reports said the princess had been prepared to be the first member of the British royal family to give evidence in court since 1891, but there was speculation afterwards that the final settlement was not greatly to her advantage.

Kenyan police apologise to U.S. envoy

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan police commissioner Shadrach Kiruki has apologised to U.S. Ambassador Annaliza Brazzel over her detention for one hour at a police roadblock in Kenya's Rift Valley, the Kenyan press reported Monday.

Mr. Kiruki said in a statement dictated on telephone to the local press late Sunday that the police officer who detained her had no instructions to act the way he did, though the area was designated as a security operation zone. "I would, therefore, like to apologise to Her Excellency the Ambassador on behalf of the police force and the Kenyan government for the inconvenience caused by our officer and departmental action is being taken against him," Mr. Kiruki said. Ms. Brazzel was held for an hour at Kongoni Police Station in Naivasha, 50 kilometres west of here, Saturday on suspicion that she was accompanying a group of opposition politicians from the Democratic Party set to visit a nearby displacement camp housing

Rabin upset about slashing of U.S. outlay for Jordan debt write-off

The Jerusalem Post

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL budget-cutting could reduce the prospects for a stable Middle East, peace and cause the U.S. to lose world power, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin warned Sunday night.

Rabin's remarks to the annual fact-finding mission of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organisations came on the eve of Tuesday's crucial Senate vote on a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget.

"I would like to have a balanced budget, too. [But] I

believe the United States — if it wants to influence events in the world — [cannot] be isolationist, with all the consequences that can happen to the world as a result of that," Rabin said.

Rabin was very upset about a House foreign operations sub-committee vote last week that slashed supplemental debt relief to Jordan from over \$200 million to \$50 million.

After hearing about the vote Rabin said "I started to realise the possibility to achieve peace in the region will be reduced."

He said if the Arab people

do not attain a peace dividend from peace with Israel, "there will be no stable peace."

"The U.S. cannot carry a real foreign policy without being strong militarily and without having a foreign aid bill," he said. Pursuing an isolationist policy would cause the U.S. to lose global influence, he added.

In a combative speech to the American Jewish leaders, Rabin warned of the dangers of those who don't seek to compromise with Arabs, suggesting that some of those adherents are false messiahs.